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THE WORKS OF GEORGE MEREDITH

MEMORIAL EDITION

VOLUME IX

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"The lamps full glow illumined and shadowed her."

CHAP. 35.

GEORGE MEREDITH

THE ADVENTURES OF HARRY RICHMOND

VOL. I

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1910

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ILLUSTRATIONS

The following are selected from the illustrations by George Du Maurier, accompanying the serial issue of the story in the *Cornhill Magazine*:—

'THE LAMP'S FULL GLOW ILLUMINED AND SHADOWED HER' . . . . *Frontispiece*

'HE HAD LAID A GUITAR ON HIS KNEES, AND FLIPPED A STRING' . . . *Facing page* 208

THE ADVENTURES OF HARRY RICHMOND

VOL. I

THE ADVENTURES OF HARRY RICHMOND

CHAPTER I

I AM A SUBJECT OF CONTENTION

One midnight of a winter month the sleepers in Riversley Grange were awakened by a ringing of the outer bell and blows upon the great hall-doors. Squire Beltham was master there: the other members of the household were, his daughter Dorothy Beltham; a married daughter Mrs. Richmond; Benjamin Sewis, an old half-caste butler; various domestic servants; and a little boy, christened Harry Lepel Richmond, the squire's grandson. Riversley Grange lay in a rich watered hollow of the Hampshire heath-country; a lonely circle of enclosed brook and pasture, within view of some of its dependent farms, but out of hail of them or any dwelling except the stables and the head-gardener's cottage. Traditions of audacious highwaymen, together with the gloomy surrounding fir-scenery, kept it alive to fears of solitude and the night; and there was that in the determined violence of the knocks and repeated bell-peals which assured all those who had ever listened in the servants' hall to prognostications of a possible night attack, that the robbers had come at last most awfully. A crowd of maids gathered along the upper corridor of the main body

of the building: two or three footmen hung lower down, bold in attitude. Suddenly the noise ended, and soon after the voice of old Sewis commanded them to scatter away to their beds; whereupon the footmen took agile leaps to the post of danger, while the women, in whose bosoms intense curiosity now supplanted terror, proceeded to a vacant room overlooking the front entrance, and spied from the window.

Meanwhile Sewis stood by his master's bedside. The squire was a hunter, of the old sort: a hard rider, deep drinker, and heavy slumberer. Before venturing to shake his arm Sewis struck a light and flashed it over the squire's eyelids to make the task of rousing him easier. At the first touch the squire sprang up, swearing by his Lord Harry he had just dreamed of fire, and muttering of buckets.

'Sewis! you 're the man, are you: where has it broken out?'

'No, sir; no fire,' said Sewis; 'you be cool, sir.'

'Cool, sir! confound it, Sewis, haven't I heard a whole town of steeples at work? I don't sleep so thick but I can hear, you dog! Fellow comes here, gives me a start, tells me to be cool; what the deuce! nobody hurt, then? all right!'

The squire had fallen back on his pillow and was relapsing to sleep.

Sewis spoke impressively: 'There 's a gentleman downstairs; a gentleman downstairs, sir. He has come rather late.'

'Gentleman downstairs come rather late.' The squire recapitulated the intelligence to possess it thoroughly. 'Rather late, eh? Oh! Shove him into a bed, and give him hot brandy and water, and be hanged to him!'

Sewis had the office of tempering a severely distasteful announcement to the squire.

He resumed: 'The gentleman doesn't talk of staying. That is not his business. It 's rather late for him to arrive.'

'Rather late!' roared the squire. 'Why, what 's it o'clock?'

Reaching a hand to the watch over his head, he caught sight of the unearthly hour. 'A quarter to two? Gentleman downstairs? Can't be that infernal apothecary who broke 's engagement to dine with me last night? By George, if it is I 'll souse him; I 'll drench him from head to heel as though the rascal 'd been drawn through the duck-pond. Two o'clock in the morning? Why, the man 's drunk. Tell him I 'm a magistrate, and I 'll commit him, deuce take him; give him fourteen days for a sot; another fourteen for impudence. I 've given a month 'fore now. Comes to me, a Justice of the peace! —man 's mad! Tell him he 's in peril of a lunatic asylum. And doesn't talk of staying? Lift him out o' the house on the top o' your boot, Sewis, and say it 's mine; you 've my leave.'

Sewis withdrew a step from the bedside. At a safe distance he fronted his master steadily; almost admonishingly. 'It 's Mr. Richmond, sir,' he said.

'Mr. . . .' The squire checked his breath. That was a name never uttered at the Grange. 'The scoundrel?' he inquired harshly, half in a tone of one assuring himself, and his rigid dropped jaw shut.

The fact had to be denied or affirmed instantly, and Sewis was silent.

Grasping his bedclothes in a lump, the squire cried: 'Downstairs? downstairs, Sewis? You 've admitted him into my house?'

'No, sir.'

'You have!'

'He is not in the house, sir.'

'You have! How did you speak to him, then?'

'Out of my window, sir.'

'What place here is the scoundrel soiling now?'

'He is on the doorstep outside the house.'

'Outside, is he? and the door 's locked?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Let him rot there!'

By this time the midnight visitor's patience had become exhausted. A renewal of his clamour for immediate attention fell on the squire's ear, amazing him to stupefaction at such challengeing insolence.

'Hand me my breeches,' he called to Sewis; 'I can't think brisk out of my breeches.'

Sewis held the garment ready. The squire jumped from the bed, fuming speechlessly, chafing at gaiters and braces, cravat and coat, and allowed his buttons to be fitted neatly on his calves; the hammering at the hall-door and plucking at the bell going on without intermission. He wore the aspect of one who assumes a forced composure under the infliction of outrages on his character in a Court of Law, where he must of necessity listen and lock his boiling replies within his indignant bosom.

'Now, Sewis, now my horsewhip,' he remarked, as if it had been a simple adjunct of his equipment.

'Your hat, sir?'

'My horsewhip, I said.'

'Your hat is in the hall,' Sewis observed gravely.

'I asked you for my horsewhip.'

'That is not to be found anywhere,' said Sewis.

The squire was diverted from his objurgations against this piece of servitorial defiance by his daughter Dorothy's timid appeal for permission to come in. Sewis left the room. Presently the squire descended, fully clad, and breathing sharply from his nostrils. Servants were warned off out of hearing; none but Sewis stood by.

The squire himself unbolted the door, and threw it open to the limit of the chain.

'Who 's there?' he demanded.

A response followed promptly from outside: 'I take you to be Mr. Harry Lepel Beltham. Correct me if I err. Accept my apologies for disturbing you at a late hour of the night, I pray.'

'Your name?'

'Is plain Augustus Fitz-George Roy Richmond at this moment, Mr. Beltham. You will recognize me better by opening your door entirely: voices are deceptive. You were born a gentleman, Mr. Beltham, and will not reduce me to request you to behave like one. I am now in the position, as it were, of addressing a badger in his den. It is on both sides unsatisfactory. It reflects egregious discredit upon you, the householder.'

The squire hastily bade Sewis see that the passages to the sleeping apartments were barred, and flung the great chain loose. He was acting under strong control of his temper.

It was a quiet grey night, and as the doors flew open, a largely-built man, dressed in a high-collared great-coat and fashionable hat of the time, stood clearly defined to view. He carried a light cane, with the point of the silver handle against his under lip. There was nothing formidable in his appearance, and his manner was affectedly affable. He lifted his hat as soon as he found himself face to face with the squire, disclosing a partially bald head, though his whiskering was luxuriant, and a robust condition of manhood was indicated by his erect attitude and the immense swell of his furred great-coat at the chest. His features were exceedingly frank and cheerful. From his superior height, he was enabled to look down quite royally on the man whose repose he had disturbed.

The following conversation passed between them.

'You now behold who it is, Mr. Beltham, that acknowledges to the misfortune of arousing you at an unseemly hour—unbetimes, as our gossips in mother Saxon might say—and with profound regret, sir, though my habit is to take it lightly.'

'Have you any accomplices lurking about here?'

'I am alone.'

'What 's your business?'

'I have no business.'

'You have no business to be here, no. I ask you what 's the object of your visit?'

'Permit me first to speak of the cause of my protracted arrival, sir. The ridicule of casting it on the post-boys will strike you, Mr. Beltham, as it does me. Nevertheless, I must do it; I have no resource. Owing to a rascal of the genus, incontinent in liquor, I have this night walked seven miles from Ewling. My complaint against him is not on my own account.'

'What brought you here at all?'

'Can you ask me?'

'I ask you what brought you to my house at all?'

'True, I might have slept at Ewling.'

'Why didn't you?'

'For the reason, Mr. Beltham, which brought me here originally. I could not wait—not a single minute. So far advanced to the neighbourhood, I would not be retarded, and I came on. I crave your excuses for the hour of my arrival. The grounds for my coming at all you will very well understand, and you will applaud me when I declare to you that I come to her penitent; to exculpate myself, certainly, but despising self-justification. I love my wife, Mr. Beltham. Yes; hear me out, sir. I can point to my unhappy star, and say, blame that more than me. That star of my birth and most

disastrous fortunes should plead on my behalf to you; to my wife at least it will.'

'You 've come to see my daughter Marian, have you?'

'My wife, sir.'

'You don't cross my threshold while I live.'

'You compel her to come out to me?'

'She stays where she is, poor wretch, till the grave takes her. You 've done your worst; be off.'

'Mr. Beltham, I am not to be restrained from the sight of my wife.'

'Scamp!'

'By no scurrilous epithets from a man I am bound to respect will I be deterred or exasperated.'

'Damned scamp, I say!' The squire having exploded his wrath gave it free way. 'I 've stopped my tongue all this while before a scoundrel 'd corkscrew the best-bottled temper right or left, go where you will one end o' the world to the other, by God! And here 's a scoundrel stinks of villany, and I 've proclaimed him 'ware my gates as a common trespasser, and deserves hanging if ever rook did nailed hard and fast to my barn doors! comes here for my daughter, when he got her by stealing her, scenting his carcase, and talking 'bout his birth, singing what not sort o' foreign mewin' stuff, and she found him out a liar and a beast, by God! And she turned home. My doors are open to my flesh and blood. And here she halts, I say, 'gainst the law, if the law 's against me. She 's crazed: you 've made her mad; she knows none of us, not even her boy. Be off; you 've done your worst; the light 's gone clean out in her; and hear me, you Richmond, or Roy, or whatever you call yourself, I tell you I thank the Lord she has lost her senses. See her or not, you 've no hold on her, and see her you shan't while I go by the name of a man.'

Mr. Richmond succeeded in preserving an air of serious deliberation under the torrent of this tremendous outburst, which was marked by scarce a pause in the delivery.

He said, 'My wife deranged! I might presume it too truly an inherited disease. Do you trifle with me, sir? Her reason unseated! and can you pretend to the right of dividing us? If this be as you say—Oh! ten thousand times the stronger my claim, my absolute claim, to cherish her. Make way for me, Mr. Beltham. I solicit humbly the holiest privilege sorrow can crave of humanity. My wife! my wife! Make way for me, sir.'

His figure was bent to advance. The squire shouted an order to Sewis to run round to the stables and slip the dogs loose.

'Is it your final decision?' Mr. Richmond asked.

'Damn your fine words! Yes, it is. I keep my flock clear of a foul sheep.'

'Mr. Beltham, I implore you, be merciful. I submit to any conditions: only let me see her. I will walk the park till morning, but say that an interview shall be granted in the morning. Frankly, sir, it is not my intention to employ force: I throw myself utterly on your mercy. I love the woman; I have much to repent of. I see her, and I go; but once I must see her. So far I also speak positively.'

'Speak as positively as you like,' said the squire.

'By the laws of nature and the laws of man, Marian Richmond is mine to support and comfort, and none can hinder me, Mr. Beltham; none, if I resolve to take her to myself.'

'Can't they!' said the squire.

'A curse be on him, heaven's lightnings descend on him, who keeps husband from wife in calamity!'

The squire whistled for his dogs.

As if wounded to the quick by this cold-blooded action, Mr. Richmond stood to his fullest height.

'Nor, sir, on my application during to-morrow's daylight shall I see her?'

'Nor, sir, on your application'—the squire drawled in uncontrollable mimicking contempt of the other's florid forms of speech, ending in his own style,—'no, you won't.'

'You claim a paternal right to refuse me: my wife is your child. Good. I wish to see my son.'

On that point the squire was equally decided. 'You can't. He 's asleep.'

'I insist.'

'Nonsense: I tell you he 's a-bed and asleep.'

'I repeat, I insist.'

'When the boy 's fast asleep, man!'

'The boy is my flesh and blood. You have spoken for your daughter—I speak for my son. I will see him, though I have to batter at your doors till sunrise.'

Some minutes later the boy was taken out of his bed by his aunt Dorothy, who dressed him by the dark window-light, crying bitterly, while she said, 'Hush, hush!' and fastened on his small garments between tender huggings of his body and kissings of his cheeks. He was told that he had nothing to be afraid of. A gentleman wanted to see him: nothing more. Whether the gentleman was a good gentleman, and not a robber, he could not learn: but his aunt Dorothy, having wrapped him warm in shawl and comforter, and tremblingly tied his hat-strings under his chin, assured him, with convulsive caresses, that it would soon be over, and he would soon be lying again snug and happy in his dear little bed. She handed him to Sewis on the stairs, keeping his fingers for an instant to kiss them: after which, old Sewis, the lord of the pantry, where all sweet things were stored, deposited

him on the floor of the hall, and he found himself facing the man of the night. It appeared to him that the stranger was of enormous size, like the giants of fairy books: for as he stood a little out of the doorway there was a peep of night sky and trees behind him, and the trees looked very much smaller, and hardly any sky was to be seen except over his shoulders.

The squire seized one of the boy's hands to present him and retain him at the same time: but the stranger plucked him from his grandfather's hold, and swinging him high, exclaimed, 'Here he is! This is Harry Richmond. He has grown a grenadier.'

'Kiss the little chap and back to bed with him,' growled the squire.

The boy was heartily kissed and asked if he had forgotten his papa. He replied that he had no papa: he had a mama and a grandpapa. The stranger gave a deep groan.

'You see what you have done; you have cut me off from my own,' he said terribly to the squire; but tried immediately to soothe the urchin with nursery talk and the pats on the shoulder which encourage a little boy to grow fast and tall. 'Four years of separation,' he resumed, 'and my son taught to think that he has no father. By heavens! it is infamous, it is a curst piece of inhumanity. Mr. Beltham, if I do not see my wife, I carry off my son.'

'You may ask till you 're hoarse, you shall never see her in this house while I am here to command,' said the squire.

'Very well; then Harry Richmond changes homes. I take him. The affair is concluded.'

'You take him from his mother?' the squire sang out.

'You swear to me she has lost her wits; she cannot suffer. I can. I shall not expect from you, Mr. Beltham,

the minutest particle of comprehension of a father's feelings. You are earthy; you are an animal.'

The squire saw that he was about to lift the boy, and said, 'Stop, never mind that. Stop, look at the case. You can call again to-morrow, and you can see me and talk it over.'

'Shall I see my wife?'

'No, you shan't.'

'You remain faithful to your word, sir, do you?'

'I do.'

'Then I do similarly.'

'What! Stop! Not to take a child like that out of a comfortable house at night in Winter, man?'

'Oh, the night is temperate and warm; he shall not remain in a house where his father is dishonoured.'

'Stop! not a bit of it,' cried the squire. 'No one speaks of you. I give you my word, you 're never mentioned by man, woman or child in the house.'

'Silence concerning a father insinuates dishonour, Mr. Beltham.'

'Damn your fine speeches, and keep your blackguardly hands off that boy,' the squire thundered. 'Mind, if you take him, he goes for good. He doesn't get a penny from me if you have the bringing of him up. You 've done for him, if you decide that way. He may stand here a beggar in a stolen coat like you, and I won't own him. Here, Harry, come to me; come to your grandad.'

Mr. Richmond caught the boy just when he was turning to run.

'That gentleman,' he said, pointing to the squire, 'is your grandpapa. I am your papa. You must learn at any cost to know and love your papa. If I call for you to-morrow or next day they will have played tricks with Harry Richmond, and hid him. Mr. Beltham, I request you, for the final time, to accord me your promise—

observe, I accept your promise—that I shall, at my demand, to-morrow or the next day, obtain an interview with my wife.'

The squire coughed out an emphatic 'Never!' and fortified it with an oath as he repeated it upon a fuller breath.

'Sir, I will condescend to entreat you to grant this permission,' said Mr. Richmond, urgently.

'No, never: I won't!' rejoined the squire, red in the face from a fit of angry coughing. 'I won't; but stop, put down that boy; listen to me, you Richmond! I 'll tell you what I 'll do. I 'll—if you swear on a Bible, like a cadger before a bench of magistrates, you 'll never show your face within a circuit o' ten miles hereabouts, and won't trouble the boy if you meet him, or my daughter or me, or any one of us—hark ye, I 'll do this: let go the boy, and I 'll give ye five hundred—I 'll give ye a cheque on my banker for a thousand pounds; and, hark me out, you do this, you swear, as I said, on the servants' Bible, in the presence of my butler and me, "Strike you dead as Ananias and t' other one if you don't keep to it," do that now, here, on the spot, and I 'll engage to see you paid fifty pounds a year into the bargain. Stop! and I 'll pay your debts under two or three hundred. For God's sake, let go the boy! You shall have fifty guineas on account this minute. Let go the boy! And your son —there, I call him your son—your son, Harry Richmond, shall inherit from me; he shall have Riversley and the best part of my property, if not every bit of it. Is it a bargain? Will you swear? Don't, and the boy 's a beggar, he 's a stranger here as much as you. Take him, and by the Lord, you ruin him. There now, never mind, stay, down with him. He 's got a cold already; ought to be in his bed; let the boy down!'

'You offer me money,' Mr. Richmond answered.

'That is one of the indignities belonging to a connection with a man like you. You would have me sell my son. To see my afflicted wife I would forfeit my heart's yearnings for my son; your money, sir, I toss to the winds; and I am under the necessity of informing you that I despise and loathe you. I shrink from the thought of exposing my son to your besotted selfish example. The boy is mine; I have him, and he shall traverse the wilderness with me. By heaven! his destiny is brilliant. He shall be hailed for what he is, the rightful claimant of a place among the proudest in the land; and mark me, Mr. Beltham, obstinate sensual old man that you are! I take the boy, and I consecrate my life to the duty of establishing him in his proper rank and station, and there, if you live and I live, you shall behold him and bow your grovelling pig's head to the earth, and bemoan the day, by heaven! when you,—a common country squire, a man of no origin, a creature with whose blood we have mixed ours—and he is stone-blind to the honour conferred on him—when you in your besotted stupidity threatened to disinherit Harry Richmond.'

The door slammed violently on such further speech as he had in him to utter. He seemed at first astonished; but finding the terrified boy about to sob, he drew a pretty box from one of his pockets and thrust a delicious sweetmeat between the whimpering lips. Then, after some moments of irresolution, during which he struck his chest soundingly and gazed down, talked alternately to himself and the boy, and cast his eyes along the windows of the house, he at last dropped on one knee and swaddled the boy in the folds of the shawl. Raising him in a business-like way, he settled him on an arm and stepped briskly across gravel-walk and lawn, like a horse to whose neck a smart touch of the whip has been applied.

The soft mild night had a moon behind it somewhere;

and here and there a light-blue space of sky showed small rayless stars; the breeze smelt fresh of roots and heath. It was more a May-night than one of February. So strange an aspect had all these quiet hill-lines and larch and fir-tree tops in the half-dark stillness, that the boy's terrors were overlaid and almost subdued by his wonderment; he had never before been out in the night, and he must have feared to cry in it, for his sobs were not loud. On a rise of the park-road where a fir-plantation began, he heard his name called faintly from the house by a woman's voice that he knew to be his aunt Dorothy's. It came after him only once: 'Harry Richmond'; but he was soon out of hearing, beyond the park, among the hollows that run dipping for miles beside the great high-road toward London. Sometimes his father whistled to him, or held him high and nodded a salutation to him, as though they had just discovered one another; and his perpetual accessibility to the influences of spicy sugar-plums, notwithstanding his grief, caused his father to prognosticate hopefully of his future wisdom. So, when obedient to command he had given his father a kiss, the boy fell asleep on his shoulder, ceasing to know that he was a wandering infant: and, if I remember rightly, he dreamed he was in a ship of cinnamon-wood upon a sea that rolled mighty, but smooth immense broad waves, and tore thing from thing without a sound or a hurt.

CHAPTER II

AN ADVENTURE ON MY OWN ACCOUNT

That night stands up without any clear traces about it or near it, like the brazen castle of romance round which the sea-tide flows. My father must have borne me miles

along the road; he must have procured food for me; I have an idea of feeling a damp forehead and drinking new milk, and by-and-by hearing a roar of voices or vehicles, and seeing a dog that went alone through crowded streets without a master, doing as he pleased, and stopping every other dog he met. He took his turning, and my father and I took ours. We were in a house that, to my senses, had the smell of dark corners, in a street where all the house-doors were painted black, and shut with a bang. Italian organ-men and milk-men paraded the street regularly, and made it sound hollow to their music. Milk, and no cows anywhere; numbers of people, and no acquaintances among them;—my thoughts were occupied by the singularity of such things.

My father could soon make me forget that I was transplanted; he could act dog, tame rabbit, fox, pony, and a whole nursery collection alive, but he was sometimes absent for days, and I was not of a temper to be on friendly terms with those who were unable to captivate my imagination as he had done. When he was at home I rode him all round the room and upstairs to bed, I lashed him with a whip till he frightened me, so real was his barking; if I said 'Menagerie' he became a caravan of wild beasts; I undid a button of his waistcoat, and it was a lion that made a spring, roaring at me; I pulled his coat-tails and off I went tugging at an old bear that swung a hind leg as he turned, in the queerest way, and then sat up and beating his breast sent out a mew-moan. Our room was richer to me than all the Grange while these performances were going forward. His monkey was almost as wonderful as his bear, only he was too big for it, and was obliged to aim at reality in his representation of this animal by means of a number of breakages; a defect that brought our landlady on the scene. The enchantment of my father's companionship caused me to

suffer proportionately in his absence. During that period of solitude, my nursemaid had to order me to play, and I would stumble about and squat in the middle of the floor, struck suddenly by the marvel of the difference between my present and my other home. My father entered into arrangements with a Punch and Judy man for him to pay me regular morning visits opposite our window; yet here again his genius defeated his kind intentions; for happening once to stand by my side during the progress of the show, he made it so vivid to me by what he said and did, that I saw no fun in it without him: I used to dread the heralding crow of Punch if he was away, and cared no longer for wooden heads being knocked ever so hard.

On Sundays we walked to the cathedral, and this was a day with a delight of its own for me. He was never away on the Sunday. Both of us attired in our best, we walked along the streets hand in hand; my father led me before the cathedral monuments, talking in a low tone of British victories, and commending the heroes to my undivided attention. I understood very early that it was my duty to imitate them. While we remained in the cathedral he talked of glory and Old England, and dropped his voice in the middle of a murmured chant to introduce Nelson's name or some other great man's: and this recurred regularly. 'What are we for now?' he would ask me as we left our house. I had to decide whether we took a hero or an author, which I soon learnt to do with capricious resolution. We were one Sunday for Shakespeare; another for Nelson or Pitt. 'Nelson, papa,' was my most frequent rejoinder, and he never dissented, but turned his steps toward Nelson's cathedral dome, and uncovered his head there, and said: 'Nelson, then, to-day'; and we went straight to his monument to perform the act of homage. I chose Nelson in preference

to the others because near bed-time in the evening my father told me stories of our hero of the day, and neither Pitt nor Shakespeare lost an eye, or an arm, or fought with a huge white bear on the ice to make himself interesting. I named them occasionally out of compassion, and to please my father, who said that they ought to have a turn. They were, he told me, in the habit of paying him a visit, whenever I had particularly neglected them, to learn the grounds for my disregard of their claims, and they urged him to intercede with me, and imparted many of their unpublished adventures, so that I should be tempted to give them a chance on the following Sunday.

'Great Will,' my father called Shakespeare, and 'Slender Billy,' Pitt. The scene where Great Will killed the deer, dragging Falstaff all over the park after it by the light of Bardolph's nose, upon which they put an extinguisher if they heard any of the keepers, and so left everybody groping about and catching the wrong person, was the most wonderful mixture of fun and tears. Great Will was extremely youthful, but everybody in the park called him, 'Father William'; and when he wanted to know which way the deer had gone, King Lear (or else my memory deceives me) punned, and Lady Macbeth waved a handkerchief for it to be steeped in the blood of the deer; Shylock ordered one pound of the carcase; Hamlet (the fact was impressed on me) offered him a three-legged stool; and a number of kings and knights and ladies lit their torches from Bardolph; and away they flew, distracting the keepers and leaving Will and his troop to the deer. That poor thing died from a different weapon at each recital, though always with a flow of blood and a successful dash of his antlers into Falstaff; and to hear Falstaff bellow! But it was mournful to hear how sorry Great Will was over the animal he had slain. He spoke like music. I found it

pathetic in spite of my knowing that the whole scene was lighted up by Bardolph's nose. When I was just bursting out crying—for the deer's tongue was lolling out and quick pantings were at his side; he had little ones at home—Great Will remembered his engagement to sell Shylock a pound of the carcase; determined that no Jew should eat of it, he bethought him that Falstaff could well spare a pound, and he said the Jew would not see the difference: Falstaff only got off by hard running and roaring out that he knew his unclean life would make him taste like pork and thus let the Jew into the trick.

My father related all this with such a veritable matter-of-fact air, and such liveliness—he sounded the chase and its cries, and showed King Lear tottering, and Hamlet standing dark, and the vast substance of Falstaff—that I followed the incidents excitedly, and really saw them, which was better than understanding them. I required some help from him to see that Hamlet's offer of a three-legged stool at a feverish moment of the chase, was laughable. He taught me what to think of it by pitching Great Will's voice high, and Hamlet's very low. By degrees I got some unconscious knowledge of the characters of Shakespeare.

There never was so fascinating a father as mine for a boy anything under eight or ten years old. He could guess on Saturday whether I should name William Pitt on the Sunday; for, on those occasions, 'Slender Billy,' as I hope I am not irreverent in calling him, made up for the dulness of his high career with a raspberry-jam tart, for which, my father told me solemnly, the illustrious Minister had in his day a passion. If I named him, my father would say, 'W. P., otherwise S. B., was born in the year so-and-so; now,' and he went to the cupboard, 'in the name of Politics, take this and meditate upon him.' The shops being all shut on Sunday,

he certainly bought it, anticipating me unerringly, on the Saturday, and, as soon as the tart appeared, we both shouted. I fancy I remember his repeating a couplet,

> 'Billy Pitt took a cake and a raspberry jam,
> When he heard they had taken Seringapatam.'

At any rate, the rumour of his having done so, at periods of strong excitement, led to the inexplicable display of foresight on my father's part.

My meditations upon Pitt were, under this influence, favourable to the post of a Prime Minister, but it was merely appetite that induced me to choose him; I never could imagine a grandeur in his office, notwithstanding my father's eloquent talk of ruling a realm, shepherding a people, hurling British thunderbolts. The day's discipline was, that its selected hero should reign the undisputed monarch of it, so when I was for Pitt, I had my tart as he used to have it, and no story, for he had none, and I think my idea of the ruler of a realm presented him to me as a sort of shadow about a pastry-cook's shop. But I surprised people by speaking of him. I made remarks to our landlady which caused her to throw up her hands and exclaim that I was astonishing. She would always add a mysterious word or two in the hearing of my nursemaid or any friend of hers who looked into my room to see me. After my father had got me forward with instructions on the piano, and exercises in early English history and the book of the Peerage, I became the wonder of the house. I was put up on a stool to play 'In my Cottage near a Wood,' or 'Cherry Ripe,' and then, to show the range of my accomplishments, I was asked, 'And who married the Dowager Duchess of Dewlap?' and I answered, 'John Gregg Wetherall, Esquire, and disgraced the family.' Then they asked me how I accounted for her behaviour.

'It was because the Duke married a dairymaid,' I replied, always tossing up my chin at that. My father had concocted the questions and prepared me for the responses, but the effect was striking, both upon his visitors and the landlady's. Gradually my ear grew accustomed to her invariable whisper on these occasions. 'Blood Rile,' she said; and her friends all said 'No!' like the run of a finger down a fiddlestring.

A gentleman of his acquaintance called on him one evening to take him out for a walk. My father happened to be playing with me when this gentleman entered our room: and he jumped up from his hands and knees, and abused him for intruding on his privacy, but afterwards he introduced him to me as Shylock's great-great-great-grandson, and said that Shylock was satisfied with a pound, and his descendant wanted two hundred pounds, or else all his body: and this, he said, came of the emigration of the family from Venice to England. My father only seemed angry, for he went off with Shylock's very great grandson arm-in-arm, exclaiming, 'To the Rialto!' When I told Mrs. Waddy about the visitor, she said, 'Oh, dear! oh, dear! then I 'm afraid your sweet papa won't return very soon, my pretty pet.' We waited a number of days, until Mrs. Waddy received a letter from him. She came full-dressed into my room, requesting me to give her twenty kisses for papa, and I looked on while she arranged her blue bonnet at the glass. The bonnet would not fix in its place. At last she sank down crying in a chair, and was all brown silk, and said that how to appear before a parcel of dreadful men, and perhaps a live duke into the bargain, was more than she knew, and more than could be expected of a lone widow woman. 'Not for worlds!' she answered my petition to accompany her. She would not, she said, have me go to my papa *there* for anything on earth; my papa would perish

at the sight of me; I was not even to wish to go. And then she exclaimed, 'Oh, the blessed child's poor papa!' and that people were cruel to him, and would never take into account his lovely temper, and that everybody was his enemy, when he ought to be sitting with the highest in the land. I had realized the extremity of my forlorn state on a Sunday that passed empty of my father, which felt like his having gone for ever. My nursemaid came in to assist in settling Mrs. Waddy's bonnet above the six crisp curls, and while they were about it I sat quiet, plucking now and then at the brown silk, partly to beg to go with it, partly in jealousy and love at the thought of its seeing him from whom I was so awfully separated. Mrs. Waddy took fresh kisses off my lips, assuring me that my father would have them in twenty minutes, and I was to sit and count the time. My nursemaid let her out. I pretended to be absorbed in counting, till I saw Mrs. Waddy pass by the window. My heart gave a leap of pain. I found the street-door open and no one in the passage, and I ran out, thinking that Mrs. Waddy would be obliged to take me if she discovered me by her side in the street.

I was by no means disconcerted at not seeing her immediately. Running on from one street to another, I took the turnings with unhesitating boldness, as if I had a destination in view. I must have been out near an hour before I understood that Mrs. Waddy had eluded me; so I resolved to enjoy the shop-windows with the luxurious freedom of one whose speculations on those glorious things all up for show are no longer distracted by the run of time and a nursemaid. Little more than a glance was enough, now that I knew I could stay as long as I liked. If I stopped at all, it was rather to exhibit the bravado of liberty than to distinguish any particular shop with my preference: all were equally beautiful; so were the carriages; so were the people. Ladies

frequently turned to look at me, perhaps because I had no covering on my head; but they did not interest me in the least. I should have been willing to ask them or any one where the Peerage lived, only my mind was quite full, and I did not care. I felt sure that a great deal of walking would ultimately bring me to St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey; to anything else I was indifferent.

Toward sunset my frame was struck as with an arrow by the sensations of hunger on passing a cook's-shop. I faltered along, hoping to reach a second one, without knowing why I had dragged my limbs from the first. There was a boy in ragged breeches, no taller than myself, standing tiptoe by the window of a very large and brilliant pastry-cook's. He persuaded me to go into the shop and ask for a cake. I thought it perfectly natural to do so, being hungry; but when I reached the counter and felt the size of the shop, I was abashed, and had to repeat the nature of my petition twice to the young woman presiding there.

'*Give* you a cake, little boy?' she said. 'We don't give cakes, we sell them.'

'Because I am hungry,' said I, pursuing my request.

Another young woman came, laughing and shaking lots of ringlets.

'Don't you see he 's not a common boy? he doesn't whine,' she remarked, and handed me a stale bun, saying, 'Here, Master Charles, and you needn't say thank you.'

'My name is Harry Richmond, and I thank you very much,' I replied.

I heard her say, as I went out, 'You can see he 's a gentleman's son.' The ragged boy was awaiting me eagerly. 'Gemini! you 're a lucky one,' he cried; 'here, come along, curly-poll.' I believe that I meant to share the bun with him, but of course he could not be aware of

my beneficent intentions: so he treated me as he thought I was for treating him, and making one snatch at the bun, ran off cramming it into his mouth. I stood looking at my hand. I learnt in that instant what thieving was, and begging, and hunger, for I would have perished rather than have asked for another cake, and as I yearned for it in absolute want of food, the boy's ungenerous treatment of me came down in a cloud on my reason. I found myself being led through the crush of people, by an old gentleman, to whom I must have related an extraordinary rigmarole. He shook his head, saying that I was unintelligible; but the questions he put to me, 'Why had I no hat on in the open street?—Where did my mother live?—What was I doing out alone in London?' were so many incitements to autobiographical composition to an infant mind, and I tumbled out my history afresh each time that he spoke. He led me into a square, stooping his head to listen all the while; but when I perceived that we had quitted the region of shops I made myself quite intelligible by stopping short and crying: 'I *am* so hungry.' He nodded and said, 'It 's no use cross-examining an empty stomach. You 'll do me the favour to dine with me, my little man. We 'll talk over your affairs by-and-by.'

My alarm at having left the savoury street of shops was not soothed until I found myself sitting at table with him, and a nice young lady, and an old one who wore a cap, and made loud remarks on my garments and everything I did. I was introduced to them as the little boy dropped from the sky. The old gentleman would not allow me to be questioned before I had eaten. It was a memorable feast. I had soup, fish, meat, and pastry, and, for the first time in my life, a glass of wine. How they laughed to see me blink and cough after I had swallowed half the glass like water. At once my tongue

was unloosed. I seemed to rise right above the roofs of London, beneath which I had been but a wandering atom a few minutes ago. I talked of my wonderful father, and Great Will, and Pitt, and the Peerage. I amazed them with my knowledge. When I finished a long recital of Great Will's chase of the deer, by saying that I did not care about politics (I meant, in my own mind, that Pitt was dull in comparison), they laughed enormously, as if I had fired them off.

'Do you know what you are, sir?' said the old gentleman; he had frowning eyebrows and a merry mouth: 'you 're a comical character.'

I felt interested in him, and asked him what he was. He informed me that he was a lawyer, and ready to be pantaloon to my clown, if I would engage him.

'Are you in the Peerage?' said I.

'Not yet,' he replied.

'Well, then,' said I, 'I know nothing about you.'

The young lady screamed with laughter. 'Oh, you funny little boy; you killing little creature!' she said, and coming round to me, lifted me out of my chair, and wanted to know if I knew how to kiss.

'Oh, yes; I 've been taught that,' said I, giving the salute without waiting for the invitation; 'but,' I added, 'I don't care about it much.'

She was indignant, and told me she was going to be offended, so I let her understand that I liked being kissed and played with in the morning before I was up, and if she would come to my house ever so early, she would find me lying next the wall and ready for her.

'And who lies outside?' she asked.

'That 's my papa,' I was beginning to say, but broke the words with a sob, for I seemed to be separated from him now by the sea itself.

They petted me tenderly. My story was extracted by alternate leading questions from the old gentleman and timely caresses from the ladies. I could tell them everything except the name of the street where I lived. My midnight excursion from the house of my grandfather excited them chiefly; also my having a mother alive who perpetually fanned her face and wore a ball-dress and a wreath; things that I remembered of my mother. The ladies observed that it was clear I was a romantic child. I noticed that the old gentleman said 'Humph,' very often, and his eyebrows were like a rook's nest in a tree when I spoke of my father walking away with Shylock's descendant and not since returning to me. A big book was fetched out of his library, in which he read my grandfather's name. I heard him mention it aloud. I had been placed on a stool beside a tea-tray near the fire, and there I saw the old red house of Riversley, and my mother dressed in white, and my aunt Dorothy; and they all complained that I had ceased to love them, and must go to bed, to which I had no objection. Somebody carried me up and undressed me, and promised me a great game of kissing in the morning.

The next day in the strange house I heard that the old gentleman had sent one of his clerks down to my grandfather at Riversley, and communicated with the constables in London; and, by-and-by, Mrs. Waddy arrived, having likewise visited those authorities, one of whom supported her claims upon me. But the old gentleman wished to keep me until his messenger returned from Riversley. He made all sorts of pretexts. In the end, he insisted on seeing my father, and Mrs. Waddy, after much hesitation, and even weeping, furnished the address: upon hearing which, spoken aside to him, he said, 'I thought so.' Mrs. Waddy entreated him to be respectful to my father, who was, she declared,

his superior, and, begging everybody's pardon present, the superior of us all, through no sin of his own, that caused him to be so unfortunate; and a real Christian and pattern, in spite of outsides, though as true a gentleman as ever walked, and by rights should be amongst the highest. She repeated 'amongst the highest' reprovingly, with the ears of barley in her blue bonnet shaking, and her hands clasped tight in her lap. Old Mr. Bannerbridge (that was the old gentleman's name) came back very late from his visit to my father, so late that he said it would be cruel to let me go out in the street after my bed-time. Mrs. Waddy consented to my remaining, on the condition of my being surrendered to her at nine o'clock, and no later, the following morning.

I was assured by Mr. Bannerbridge that my father's health and appetite were excellent; he gave me a number of unsatisfying messages, all the rest concerning his interview he whispered to his daughter and his sister, Miss Bannerbridge, who said they hoped they would have news from Hampshire very early, so that the poor child might be taken away by the friends of his infancy. I could understand that my father was disapproved of by them, and that I was a kind of shuttlecock flying between two battledores; but why they pitied me I could not understand. There was a great battle about me when Mrs. Waddy appeared punctual to her appointed hour. The victory was hers, and I, her prize, passed a whole day in different conveyances, the last of which landed us miles away from London, at the gates of an old drooping, mossed and streaked farmhouse, that was like a wall-flower in colour.

CHAPTER III

DIPWELL FARM

In rain or in sunshine this old farmhouse had a constant resemblance to a wall-flower; and it had the same moist earthy smell, except in the kitchen, where John and Martha Thresher lived, apart from their furniture. All the fresh eggs, and the butter stamped with three bees, and the pots of honey, the fowls, and the hare lifted out of the hamper by his hind legs, and the country loaves smelling heavenly, which used to come to Mrs. Waddy's address in London, and appear on my father's table, were products of Dipwell farm, and presents from her sister, Martha Thresher. On receiving this information I felt at home in a moment, and asked right off, 'How long am I to stay here?—Am I going away to-morrow?—What 's going to be done with me?' The women found these questions of a youthful wanderer touching. Between kissings and promises of hens to feed, and eggs that were to come of it, I settled into contentment. A strong impression was made on me by Mrs. Waddy's saying, 'Here, Master Harry, your own papa will come for you; and you may be sure he will, for I have his word he will, and he 's not one to break it, unless his country 's against him; and for his darling boy he 'd march against cannons. So here you 'll sit and wait for him, won't you?' I sat down immediately, looking up. Mrs. Waddy and Mrs. Thresher raised their hands. I had given them some extraordinary proof of my love for my father. The impression I received was, that sitting was the thing to conjure him to me.

'Where his heart 's not concerned,' Mrs. Waddy remarked of me flatteringly, 'he 's shrewd as a little schoolmaster.'

'He 've a bird's-nesting eye,' said Mrs. Thresher, whose face I was studying.

John Thresher wagered I would be a man before either of them reached that goal. But whenever he spoke he suffered correction on account of his English.

'More than his eating and his drinking, that child's father worrits about his learning to speak the language of a British gentleman,' Mrs. Waddy exclaimed. 'Before that child your *h*'s must be like the panting of an engine —to please his father. He 'd stop me carrying the dinner-tray on meat-dish hot, and I 'm to repeat what I said, to make sure the child haven't heard anything ungrammatical. The child's nursemaid he 'd lecture so, the poor girl would come down to me ready to bend double, like a bundle of nothing, his observations so took the pride out of her. That 's because he 's a father who knows his duty to the child:—"Child!" says he, "man, ma'am." It 's just as you, John, when you sow your seed you think of your harvest. So don't take it ill of me, John; I beg of you be careful of your English. Turn it over as you 're about to speak.'

'Change loads on the road, you mean,' said John Thresher. 'Na, na, he 's come to settle nigh a weedy field, if you like, but his crop ain't nigh reaping yet. Hark you, Mary Waddy, who 're a widde, which 's as much as say, an unocc'pied mind, there 's cockney, and there 's country, and there 's school. Mix the three, strain, and throw away the sediment. Now, yon 's my view.

His wife and Mrs. Waddy said reflectively, in a breath, 'True!'

'Drink or no, that 's the trick o' brewery,' he added.

They assented. They began praising him, too, like meek creatures.

'What John says is worth listening to, Mary. You may be over-careful. A stew 's a stew, and not a boiling to shreds, and you want a steady fire, and not a furnace.'

'Oh, I quite agree with John, Martha: we must take the good and the evil in a world like this.'

'Then I 'm no scholar, and you 're at ease,' said John.

Mrs. Waddy put her mouth to his ear.

Up went his eyebrows, wrinkling arches over a petrified stare.

In some way she had regained her advantage. 'Art sure of it?' he inquired.

'Pray, don't offend me by expressing a doubt of it,' she replied, bowing.

John Thresher poised me in the very centre of his gaze. He declared he would never have guessed that, and was reproved, inasmuch as he might have guessed it. He then said that I could not associate with any of the children thereabout, and my dwelling in the kitchen was not to be thought of. The idea of my dwelling in the kitchen seemed to be a serious consideration with Mrs. Martha likewise. I was led into the rooms of state. The sight of them was enough. I stamped my feet for the kitchen, and rarely in my life have been happier than there, dining and supping with John and Martha and the farm-labourers, expecting my father across the hills, and yet satisfied with the sun. To hope, and not be impatient, is really to believe, and this was my feeling in my father's absence. I knew he would come, without wishing to hurry him. He had the world beyond the hills; I this one, where a slow full river flowed from the sounding mill under our garden wall, through long meadows. In Winter the wild ducks made letters of the alphabet flying. On the other side

of the copses bounding our home, there was a park containing trees old as the History of England, John Thresher said, and the thought of their venerable age enclosed me comfortably. He could not tell me whether he meant as old as the book of English History; he fancied he did, for the furrow-track follows the plough close upon; but no one exactly could swear when that (the book) was put together. At my suggestion, he fixed the trees to the date of the Heptarchy, a period of heavy ploughing. Thus begirt by Saxon times, I regarded Riversley as a place of extreme baldness, a Greenland, untrodden by my Alfred and my Harold. These heroes lived in the circle of Dipwell, confidently awaiting the arrival of my father. He sent me once a glorious letter. Mrs. Waddy took one of John Thresher's pigeons to London, and in the evening we beheld the bird cut the sky like an arrow, bringing round his neck a letter warm from him I loved. Planet communicating with planet would be not more wonderful to men than words of his to me, travelling in such a manner. I went to sleep, and awoke imagining the bird bursting out of heaven.

Meanwhile there was an attempt to set me moving again. A strange young man was noticed in the neighbourhood of the farm, and he accosted me at Leckham fair. 'I say, don't we know one another? How about your grandfather the squire, and your aunt, and Mr. Bannerbridge? I 've got news for you.'

Not unwilling to hear him, I took his hand, leaving my companion, the miller's little girl, Mabel Sweetwinter, at a toy-stand, while Bob, her brother and our guardian, was shying sticks in a fine attitude. 'Yes, and your father, too,' said the young man; 'come along and see him; you can run?' I showed him how fast. We were pursued by Bob, who fought for me, and won me, and

my allegiance instantly returned to him. He carried me almost the whole of the way back to Dipwell. Women must feel for the lucky heroes who win them something of what I felt for mine; I kissed his bloody face, refusing to let him wipe it. John Thresher said to me at night, 'Ay, now you 've got a notion of boxing; and will you believe it, Master Harry, there 's people fools enough to want to tread that ther' first-rate pastime under foot? I speak truth, and my word for 't, they 'd better go in petticoats. Let clergymen preach as in duty bound; you and I 'll uphold a manful sport, we will, and a cheer for Bob!'

He assured me, and he had my entire faith, that boxing was England's natural protection from the foe. The comfort of having one like Bob to defend our country from invasion struck me as inexpressible. Lighted by John Thresher's burning patriotism, I entered the book of the History of England at about the pace of a cart-horse, with a huge waggon at my heels in the shape of John. There was no moving on until he was filled. His process of receiving historical knowledge was to fight over again the personages who did injury to our honour as a nation, then shake hands and be proud of them. 'For where we ain't quite successful we 're cunning,' he said; 'and we not being able to get rid of William the Conqueror, because he 's got a will of his own and he won't budge, why, we takes and makes him one of ourselves; and no disgrace in that, I should hope! He paid us a compliment, don't you see, Master Harry? he wanted to be an Englishman. "Can you this?" says we, sparrin' up to him. "Pretty middlin'," says he, "and does it well." "Well then," says we, "then you 're one of us, and we 'll beat the world"; and did so.'

John Thresher had a laborious mind; it cost him

beads on his forehead to mount to these heights of meditation. He told me once that he thought one's country was like one's wife: you were born in the first, and married to the second, and had to learn all about them afterwards, ay, and make the best of them. He recommended me to mix, strain, and throw away the sediment, for that was the trick o' brewery. Every puzzle that beset him in life resolved to this cheerful precept, the value of which, he said, was shown by clear brown ale, the drink of the land. Even as a child I felt that he was peculiarly an Englishman. Tales of injustice done on the Niger river would flush him in a heat of wrath till he cried out for fresh taxes to chastise the villains. Yet at the sight of the beggars at his gates he groaned at the taxes existing, and enjoined me to have pity on the poor taxpayer when I lent a hand to patch the laws. I promised him I would unreservedly, with a laugh, but with a sincere intention to legislate in a direct manner on his behalf. He, too, though he laughed, thanked me kindly.

I was clad in black for my distant mother. Mrs. Waddy brought down a young man from London to measure me, so that my mourning attire might be in the perfect cut of fashion. 'The child's papa would strip him if he saw him in a country tailor's funeral suit,' she said, and seemed to blow a wind of changes on me that made me sure my father had begun to stir up his part of the world. He sent me a prayer in his own handwriting to say for my mother in heaven. I saw it flying up between black edges whenever I shut my eyes. Martha Thresher dosed me for liver. Mrs. Waddy found me pale by the fireside, and prescribed iron. Both agreed upon high-feeding, and the apothecary agreed with both in everything, which reconciled them, for both good women loved me so heartily they

were near upon disputing over the medicines I was to consume.

Under such affectionate treatment I betrayed the alarming symptom that my imagination was set more on my mother than on my father: I could not help thinking that for any one to go to heaven was stranger than to drive to Dipwell, and I had this idea when my father was clasping me in his arms; but he melted it like snow off the fields. He came with postillions in advance of him wearing crape rosettes, as did the horses. We were in the cricket-field, where Dipwell was playing its first match of the season, and a Dipwell lad, furious to see the elevens commit such a breach of the rules and decency as to troop away while the game was hot, and surround my father, flung the cricket-ball into the midst and hit two or three of the men hard. My father had to shield him from the consequences. He said he liked that boy; and he pleaded for him so winningly and funnily that the man who was hurt most laughed loudest.

Standing up in the carriage, and holding me by the hand, he addressed them by their names: 'Sweetwinter, I thank you for your attention to my son; and you, Thribble; and you, my man; and you, Baker; Rippengale, and you; and you, Jupp'; as if he knew them personally. It was true he nodded at random. Then he delivered a short speech, and named himself a regular subscriber to their innocent pleasures. He gave them money, and scattered silver coin among the boys and girls, and praised John Thresher, and Martha, his wife, for their care of me, and pointing to the chimneys of the farm, said that the house there was holy to him from henceforth, and he should visit it annually if possible, but always in the month of May, and in the shape of his subscription, as certain as the cowslip. The men, after

their fit of cheering, appeared unwilling to recommence their play, so he alighted and delivered the first ball, and then walked away with my hand in his, saying: 'Yes, my son, we will return to them tenfold what they have done for you. The eleventh day of May shall be a day of pleasure for Dipwell while I last, and you will keep it in memory of me when I am gone. And now to see the bed you have slept in.'

Martha Thresher showed him the bed, showed him flowers I had planted, and a Spanish chestnut tree just peeping.

'Ha!' said he, beaming at every fresh sight of my doings: 'madam, I am your life-long debtor and friend!' He kissed her on the cheek.

John Thresher cried out: 'Why, dame, you trembles like a maid.'

She spoke very faintly, and was red in the face up to the time of our departure. John stood like a soldier. We drove away from a cheering crowd of cricketers and farm-labourers, as if discharged from a great gun. 'A royal salvo!' said my father, and asked me earnestly whether I had forgotten to reward and take a particular farewell of any one of my friends. I told him I had forgotten no one, and thought it was true, until on our way up the sandy lane, which offered us a last close view of the old wall-flower farm front, I saw little Mabel Sweetwinter, often my playfellow and bedfellow, a curly-headed girl, who would have danced on Sunday for a fairing, and eaten gingerbread nuts during a ghost-story. She was sitting by a furze-bush in flower, cherishing in her lap a lamb that had been worried. She looked half up at me, and kept looking so, but would not nod. Then good-bye, thought I, and remembered her look when I had forgotten that of all the others.

CHAPTER IV

I HAVE A TASTE OF GRANDEUR

THOUGH I had not previously seen a postillion in my life, I gazed on the pair bobbing regularly on their horses before me, without a thought upon the marvel of their sudden apparition and connection with my fortunes. I could not tire of hearing the pleasant music of the many feet at the trot, and tried to explain to my father that the men going up and down made it like a piano that played of itself. He laughed and kissed me; he remembered having once shown me the inside of a piano when the keys were knocked. My love for him as we drove into London had a recognized footing: I perceived that he was my best friend and only true companion, besides his being my hero. The wicked men who had parted us were no longer able to do harm, he said. I forgot, in my gladness at their defeat, to ask what had become of Shylock's descendant.

Mrs. Waddy welcomed us when we alighted. Do not imagine that it was at the door of her old house. It was in a wide street opening on a splendid square, and pillars were before the houses, and inside there was the enchantment of a little fountain playing thin as whipcord, among ferns, in a rock-basin under a window that glowed with kings of England, copied from boys' history books. All the servants were drawn up in the hall to do homage to me. They seemed less real and living than the wonder of the sweet-smelling chairs, the birds, and the elegant dogs. Richest of treats, a monkey was introduced to me. 'It 's your papa's whim,' Mrs. Waddy said, resignedly; 'he says he must have his jester. Indeed it is no joke to me.'

Yet she smiled happily, though her voice was melancholy. From her I now learnt that my name was Richmond Roy, and not Harry Richmond. I said, 'Very well,' for I was used to change. Everybody in the house wore a happy expression of countenance, except the monkey, who was too busy. As we mounted the stairs I saw more kings of England painted on the back-windows. Mrs. Waddy said: 'It is considered to give a monarchical effect,'—she coughed modestly after the long word, and pursued: 'as it should.' I insisted upon going to the top floor, where I expected to find William the Conqueror, and found him; but that strong connecting link between John Thresher and me presented himself only to carry my recollections of the Dipwell of yesterday as far back into the past as the old Norman days.

'And down go all the kings, downstairs,' I said, surveying them consecutively.

'Yes,' she replied, in a tone that might lead one to think it their lamentable fate. 'And did the people look at you as you drove along through the streets, Master Richmond?'

I said 'Yes,' in turn; and then we left off answering, but questioned one another, which is a quicker way of getting at facts; I know it is with boys and women. Mrs. Waddy cared much less to hear of Dipwell and its inhabitants than of the sensation created everywhere by our equipage. I noticed that when her voice was not melancholy her face was. She showed me a beautiful little pink bed, having a crown over it, in a room opening to my father's. Twenty thousand magnificent dreams seemed to flash their golden doors when I knew that the bed was mine. I thought it almost as nice as a place by my father's side.

'Don't you like it, Mrs. Waddy?' I said.

She smiled and sighed. 'Like it? Oh! yes, my dear,

to be sure I do. I only hope it won't vanish.' She simpered and looked sad.

I had too many distractions, or I should have asked her whether my amazing and delightful new home had ever shown symptoms of vanishing; it appeared to me, judging from my experience, that nothing moved violently except myself, and my principal concern was lest any one should carry me away at a moment's notice. In the evening I was introduced to a company of gentlemen, who were drinking wine after dinner with my father. They clapped their hands and laughed immoderately on my telling them that I thought those kings of England who could not find room on the windows must have gone down to the cellars.

'They are going,' my father said. He drank off a glassful of wine and sighed prodigiously. 'They are going, gentlemen, going there, like good wine, like old Port, which they tell us is going also. Favour me by drinking to the health of Richmond Roy the younger.'

They drank to me heartily, but my father had fallen mournful before I left the room.

Pony-riding, and lessons in boxing and wrestling, and lessons in French from a French governess, at whose appearance my father always seemed to be beginning to dance a minuet, so exuberantly courteous was he; and lessons in Latin from a tutor, whom my father invited to dinner once a fortnight, but did not distinguish otherwise than occasionally to take down Latin sentences in a notebook from his dictation, occupied my mornings. My father told the man who instructed me in the art of self-defence that our family had always patronized his profession. I wrestled ten minutes every day with this man's son, and was regularly thrown. On fine afternoons I was dressed in black velvet for a drive in the park, where my father uncovered his head to numbers of people,

and was much looked at. 'It is our duty, my son, never to forget names and persons; I beg you to bear that in mind, my dearest Richie,' he said. We used to go to his opera-box; and we visited the House of Lords and the House of Commons; and my father, though he complained of the decay of British eloquence, and mourned for the days of Chatham, and William Pitt (our old friend of the cake and the raspberry jam), and Burke, and Sheridan, encouraged the orators with approving murmurs.

My father no longer laid stress on my studies of the Peerage. 'Now I have you in the very atmosphere, *that* will come of itself,' he said. I wished to know whether I was likely to be transported suddenly to some other place. He assured me that nothing save a convulsion of the earth would do it, which comforted me, for I took the firmness of the earth in perfect trust. We spoke of our old Sunday walks to St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey as of a day that had its charm. Our pew among a fashionable congregation pleased him better. The pew-opener curtseyed to none as she did to him. For my part, I missed the monuments and the chants, and something besides that had gone—I knew not what. At the first indication of gloom in me, my father became alarmed, and, after making me stand with my tongue out before himself and Mrs. Waddy, like a dragon in a piece of tapestry, would resume his old playfulness, and try to be the same that he had been in Mrs. Waddy's lodgings. Then we read the Arabian Nights together, or, rather, he read them to me, often acting out the incidents as we rode or drove abroad. An omission to perform a duty was the fatal forgetfulness to sprinkle pepper on the cream-tarts; if my father subjected me to an interrogation concerning my lessons, he was the dread African magician to whom must be surrendered my

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acquisition of the ring and the musty old lamp. We were quite in the habit of meeting fair Persians. He would frequently ejaculate that he resembled the Three Calendars in more respects than one. To divert me during my recovery from measles, he one day hired an actor in a theatre, and put a cloth round his neck, and seated him in a chair, rubbed his chin with soap, and played the part of the Barber over him, and I have never laughed so much in my life. Poor Mrs. Waddy got her hands at her sides, and kept on gasping, 'Oh, sir! oh!' while the Barber hurried away from the half-shaved young man to consult his pretended astrolabe in the next room, where we heard him shouting the sun's altitude, and consulting its willingness for the impatient young man to be further shaved; and back he came, seeming refreshed to have learnt the sun's favourable opinion, and gabbling at an immense rate, full of barber's business. The servants were allowed to be spectators; but as soon as the young man was shaved, my father dismissed them with the tone of a master. No wonder they loved him. Mrs. Waddy asked who could help it?

I remember a pang I had when she spoke of his exposure to the risk of marrying again; it added a curious romantic tenderness to my adoration of him, and made me feel that he and I stood against the world. To have his hand in mine was my delight. Then it was that I could think earnestly of Prince Ahmed and the kind and beautiful Peribanou, whom I would not have minded his marrying. My favourite dream was to see him shooting an arrow in a match for a prize, and losing the prize because of not finding his arrow, and wondering where the arrow had flown to, and wandering after it till he passed out of green fields to grassy rocks, and to a stony desert, where at last he found his arrow at an enormous distance from the shooting line, and there was the desert

all about him, and the sweetest fairy ever imagined going to show herself to him in the ground under his feet. In his absence I really hungered for him, and was jealous.

During this Arabian life, we sat on a carpet that flew to the Continent, where I fell sick, and was cured by smelling at an apple; and my father directed our movements through the aid of a telescope, which told us the titles of the hotels ready to receive us. As for the cities and cathedrals, the hot meadows under mountains, the rivers and the castles—they were little more to me than an animated book of geography, opening and shutting at random; and travelling from place to place must have seemed to me so much like the life I had led, that I was generally as quick to cry as to laugh, and was never at peace between any two emotions. By-and-by I lay in a gondola with a young lady. My father made friends fast on our travels: her parents were among the number, and she fell in love with me and enjoyed having the name of Peribanou, which I bestowed on her for her delicious talk of the blue and red-striped posts that would spout up fountains of pearls if they were plucked from their beds, and the palaces that had flown out of the farthest corners of the world, and the city that would some night or other vanish suddenly, leaving bare sea-ripple to say 'Where? where?' as they rolled over. I would have seen her marry my father happily. She was like rest and dreams to me, soft sea and pearls. We entered into an arrangement to correspond for life. Her name was Clara Goodwin; she requested me to go always to the Horse Guards to discover in what part of the world Colonel Goodwin might be serving when I wanted to write to her. I, in return, could give no permanent address, so I related my history from the beginning. 'To write to you would be the same as writing to a river,' she said;

and insisted that I should drop the odious name of Roy when I grew a man. My father quarrelled with Colonel Goodwin. Months after I felt as if I had only just been torn from Clara, but she stood in a mist, irrecoverably distant. I had no other friend.

Twelve dozen of splendid Burgundy were the fruit of our tour, to be laid down at Dipwell farm for my arrival at my majority, when I should be a legal man, embarked in my own ship, as my father said. I did not taste the wine. 'Porter for me that day, please God!' cried Mrs. Waddy, who did. My father eyed her with pity, and ordered her to send the wine down to Dipwell, which was done. He took me between his knees, and said impressively, 'Now, Richie, twelve dozen of the best that man can drink await you at the gates of manhood. Few fathers can say that to their sons, my boy! If we drink it together, blessings on the day! If I 'm gone, Richie, shut up in the long box,' his voice shook, and he added, 'gone to Peribanou underneath, you know, remember that your dada saw that the wine was a good vintage, and bought it and had it bottled in his own presence while you were asleep in the Emperor's room in the fine old Burgundy city, and swore that, whatever came to them both, his son should drink the wine of princes on the day of his majority.' Here my father's tone was highly exalted, and he sat in a great flush.

I promised him I would bend my steps toward Dipwell to be there on my twenty-first birthday, and he pledged himself to be there in spirit at least, bodily if possible. We sealed the subject with some tears. He often talked of commissioning a poet to compose verses about that wonderful coming day at Dipwell. The thought of the day in store for us sent me strutting as though I had been in the presence of my drill-master. Mrs. Waddy, however, grew extremely melancholy at the mention of it.

'Lord only knows where we shall all be by that time!' she sighed.

'She is a dewy woman,' said my father, disdainfully. They appeared always to be at variance, notwithstanding her absolute devotion to him. My father threatened to have her married to somebody immediately if she afflicted him with what he called her Waddyism. She had got the habit of exclaiming at the end of her remarks, 'No matter; our clock strikes soon!' in a way that communicated to me an obscure idea of a door going to open unexpectedly in one of the walls, and conduct us, by subterranean passages, into a new country. My father's method of rebuking her anxious nature was to summon his cook, the funniest of Frenchmen, Monsieur Alphonse, and issue orders for a succession of six dinner-parties. 'And now, ma'am, you have occupation for your mind,' he would say.

To judge by the instantaneous composure of her whole appearance, he did produce a temporary abatement of her malady. The good soul bustled out of the room in attendance upon M. Alphonse, and never complained while the dinners lasted, but it was whispered that she had fits in the upper part of the house. No sooner did my father hear the rumour than he accused her to her face of this enormity, telling her that he was determined to effect a permanent cure, even though she should drive him to unlimited expense. We had a Ball party and an Aladdin supper, and for a fortnight my father hired postillions; we flashed through London. My father backed a horse to run in the races on Epsom Downs named Prince Royal, only for the reason that his name was Prince Royal, and the horse won, which was, he said, a proof to me that in our country it was common prudence to stick to Royalty; and he bade me note that if he went in a carriage and two, he was comparatively unnoticed,

whereas when he was beheld in a carriage and four, with postillions, at a glance from him the country people tugged their forelocks, and would like, if he would let them, to kiss his hand. 'We will try the scarlet livery on one of our drives, Richie,' said he. Mrs. Waddy heard him. 'It is unlawful, sir,' she said. 'For whom, ma'am?' asked my father. 'None but Royal . . .' she was explaining, but stopped, for he showed her an awful frown, and she cried so that my heart ached for her. My father went out to order the livery on the spot. He was very excited. Then it was that Mrs. Waddy, embracing me, said, 'My dear, my own Master Richmond, my little Harry, prepare your poor child's heart for evil days.' I construed her unintelligible speech as an attack upon my father, and abused her violently.

While I was in this state of wrathful championship, the hall-door was opened. I ran out and caught sight of my aunt Dorothy, in company with old Mr. Bannerbridge. I was kissed and hugged for I know not how long, until the smell of Riversley took entire possession of me, and my old home seemed nearer than the one I lived in; but my aunt, seeing tears on my cheeks, asked me what was my cause of sorrow. In a moment I poured out a flood of complaints against Mrs. Waddy for vexing my father. When she heard of the scarlet livery, my aunt lifted her hands. 'The man is near the end of his wits and his money together,' said Mr. Bannerbridge; and she said to me, 'My darling Harry will come back to his own nice little room, and see his grandpapa soon, won't you, my pet? All is ready for him there as it used to be, except poor mama. "Kiss my boy, my Harry—Harry Richmond." Those were her last words on her death-bed, before she went to God, Harry, my own! There is Sampson the pony, and Harry's dog Prince, and his lamb Daisy, grown a sheep, and the ploughboy, Dick,

with the big boots.' Much more sweet talk of the same current that made my face cloudy and bright, and filled me with desire for Riversley, to see my mother's grave and my friends.

Aunt Dorothy looked at me. 'Come now,' she said; 'come with me, Harry.' Her trembling seized on me like a fire. I said, 'Yes,' though my heart sank as if I had lost my father with the word. She caught me in her arms tight, murmuring, 'And dry our tears and make our house laugh. Oh! since the night that Harry went . . . And I am now Harry's mama, he has me.'

I looked on her forehead for the wreath of white flowers my mother used to wear, and thought of my father's letter with the prayer written on the black-bordered page. I said I would go, but my joy in going was gone. We were stopped in the doorway by Mrs. Waddy. Nothing would tempt her to surrender me. Mr. Bannerbridge tried reasoning with her, and, as he said, put the case, which seemed to have perched on his forefinger. He talked of my prospects, of my sole chance of being educated morally and virtuously as became the grandson of an English gentleman of a good old family, and of my father having spent my mother's estate, and of the danger of his doing so with mine, and of religious duty and the awfulness of the position Mrs. Waddy stood in. He certainly subdued me to very silent breathing, but did not affect me as my aunt Dorothy's picturing of Riversley had done; and when Mrs. Waddy, reduced to an apparent submissiveness, addressed me piteously, 'Master Richmond, would you leave papa?' I cried out, 'No, no, never leave my papa,' and twisted away from my aunt's keeping. My father's arrival caused me to be withdrawn, but I heard his offer of his hospitality and all that was his; and subsequently there was loud talking on his part. I was kissed by my aunt before she went. She whispered,

'Come to us when you are free; think of us when you pray.' She was full of tears. Mr. Bannerbridge patted my head.

The door closed on them and I thought it was a vision that had passed. But now my father set my heart panting with questions as to the terrible possibility of us two ever being separated. In some way he painted my grandfather so black that I declared earnestly I would rather die than go to Riversley; I would never utter the name of the place where there was evil speaking of the one I loved dearest. 'Do not, my son,' he said solemnly, 'or it parts us two.' I repeated after him, 'I am a Roy and not a Beltham.' It was enough to hear that insult and shame had been cast on him at Riversley for me to hate the name of the place. We cried and then laughed together, and I must have delivered myself with amazing eloquence, for my father held me at arms' length and said, 'Richie, the notion of training you for a General commandership of the British army is a good one, but if you have got the winning tongue, the woolsack will do as well for a whisper in the ear of the throne. That is our aim, my son. We say,—you will not acknowledge our birth, you shall acknowledge our worth.' He complained bitterly of my aunt Dorothy bringing a lawyer to our house. The sins of Mrs. Waddy were forgiven her, owing to her noble resistance to the legal gentleman's seductive speech. So I walked up and down stairs with the kings of England looking at me out of the coloured windows quietly for a week; and then two ugly men entered the house, causing me to suffer a fearful oppression, though my father was exceedingly kind to them and had beds provided for them, saying that they were very old retainers of his.

But the next day our scarlet livery appeared. After exacting particular attention to his commands, my father quitted Mrs. Waddy, and we mounted the carriage, laughing

at her deplorable eyes and prim lips, which he imitated for my amusement. 'A load is off my head,' he remarked. He asked me if splendour did not fatigue me also. I caught the answer from his face and replied that it did, and that I should like to go right on to Dipwell. 'The Burgundy sleeps safe there,' said my father, and thought over it. We had an extraordinary day. People stood fast to gaze at us; in the country some pulled off their hats and set up a cheer. The landlords of the inns where we baited remained bare-headed until we started afresh, and I, according to my father's example, bowed and lifted my cap gravely to persons saluting us along the roads. Nor did I seek to know the reason for this excess of respectfulness; I was beginning to take to it naturally. At the end of a dusty high-road, where it descends the hill into a town, we drew up close by a high red wall, behind which I heard boys shouting at play. We went among them, accompanied by their master. My father tipped the head boy for the benefit of the school, and following lunch with the master and his daughter, to whom I gave a kiss at her request, a half-holiday was granted to the boys in my name. How they cheered! The young lady saw my delight, and held me at the window while my father talked with hers; and for a long time after I beheld them in imagination talking: that is to say, my father issuing his instructions and Mr. Rippenger receiving them like a pliant hodman; for the result of it was that two days later, without seeing my kings of England, my home again, or London, I was Julia Rippenger's intimate friend and the youngest pupil of the school. My father told me subsequently that we slept at an hotel those two nights intervening. Memory transplants me from the coach and scarlet livery straight to my place of imprisonment.

CHAPTER V

I MAKE A DEAR FRIEND

Heriot was the name of the head boy of the school. Boddy was the name of one of the ushers. They were both in love with Julia Rippenger. It was my fortune to outrun them in her favour for a considerable period, during which time, though I had ceased to live in state, and was wearing out my suits of velvet, and had neither visit nor letter from my father, I was in tolerable bliss. Julia's kisses were showered on me for almost anything I said or did, but her admiration of heroism and daring was so fervent that I was in no greater danger of becoming effeminate than Achilles when he wore girl's clothes. She was seventeen, an age bewitching for boys to look up to and men to look down on. The puzzle of the school was how to account for her close relationship to old Rippenger. Such an apple on such a crab-tree seemed monstrous. Heriot said that he hoped Boddy would marry old Rippenger's real daughter, and, said he, that 's birch-twigs. I related his sparkling speech to Julia, who laughed, accusing him, however, of impudence. She let me see a portrait of her dead mother, an Irish lady raising dark eyelashes, whom she resembled. I talked of the portrait to Heriot, and as I had privileges accorded to none of the other boys and could go to her at any hour of the day after lessons, he made me beg for him to have a sight of it. She considered awhile, but refused. On hearing of the unkind refusal, Heriot stuck his hands into his pockets and gave up cricketing. We saw him leaning against a wall in full view of her window, while the boys crowded round him trying to get him to practise,

a school-match of an important character coming off with a rival academy; and it was only through fear of our school being beaten if she did not relent that Julia handed me the portrait, charging me solemnly to bring it back. I promised, of course. Heriot went into his favourite corner of the playground, and there looked at it and kissed it, and then buttoned his jacket over it tight, growling when I asked him to return it. Julia grew frightened. She sent me with numbers of petitions to him.

'Look here, young un,' said Heriot; 'you 're a good little fellow, and I like you, but just tell her I believe in nothing but handwriting, and if she writes to me for it humbly and nicely she shall have it back. Say I only want to get a copy taken by a first-rate painter.'

Julia shed tears at his cruelty, called him cruel, wicked, false to his word. She wrote, but the letter did not please him, and his reply was scornful. At prayers morning and evening, it was pitiful to observe her glance of entreaty and her downfallen eyelashes. I guessed that in Heriot's letters to her he wanted to make her confess something, which she would not do. 'Now I write to him no more; let him know it, my darling,' she said, and the consequence of Heriot's ungrateful obstinacy was that we all beheld her, at the ceremony of the consecration of the new church, place her hand on Mr. Boddy's arm and allow him to lead her about. Heriot kept his eyes on them; his mouth was sharp, and his arms stiff by his sides. I was the bearer of a long letter to her that evening. She tore it to pieces without reading it. Next day Heriot walked slowly past Mr. Boddy holding the portrait in his hands. The usher called to him!—

'What have you there, Heriot?'

My hero stared. 'Only a family portrait,' he answered,

thrusting it safe in his pocket and fixing his gaze on Julia's window.

'Permit me to look at it,' said Mr. Boddy.

'Permit me to decline to let you,' said Heriot.

'Look at me, sir,' cried Boddy.

'I prefer to look elsewhere, sir,' replied Heriot, and there was Julia visible at her window.

'I asked you, sir, civilly,' quoth Boddy, 'for permission to look,—I used the word intentionally; I say I asked you for permission . . .'

'No, you didn't,' Heriot retorted, quite cool; 'inferentially you did; but you did not use the word permission.'

'And you turned upon me impudently,' pursued Boddy, whose colour was thunder: 'you quibbled, sir; you prevaricated; you concealed what you were carrying . . .'

'Am carrying,' Heriot corrected his tense; 'and mean to, in spite of every Boddy,' he murmured audibly.

'Like a rascal detected in an act of felony,' roared Boddy, 'you concealed it, sir . . .'

'Conceal it, sir.'

'And I demand, in obedience to my duty, that you instantly exhibit it for my inspection, now, here, at once; no parleying; unbutton, or I call Mr. Rippenger to compel you.'

I was standing close by my brave Heriot, rather trembling, studious of his manfulness though I was. His left foot was firmly in advance, as he said, just in the manner to start an usher furious:—

'I concealed it, I conceal it; I was carrying it, I carry it: you demand *that* I exhibit for your inspection what I mean no Boddy to see? I have to assure you respectfully, sir, that family portraits are sacred things with the sons of gentlemen. Here, Richie, off!'

I found the portrait in my hand, and Heriot between me and the usher, in the attitude of a fellow keeping another out of his home at prisoner's-base. He had spied Mr. Rippenger's head at the playground gate. I had just time to see Heriot and the usher in collision before I ran through the gate and into Julia's arms in her garden, whither the dreadful prospect of an approaching catastrophe had attracted her.

Heriot was merely reported guilty of insolence. He took his five hundred lines of Virgil with his usual sarcastic dignity: all he said to Mr. Rippenger was, 'Let it be about Dido, sir,' which set several of the boys upon Dido's history, but Heriot was condemned to the battles with Turnus. My share in this event secured Heriot's friendship to me without costing me the slightest inconvenience. 'Papa would never punish you,' Julia said; and I felt my rank. Nor was it wonderful I should when Mr. Rippenger was constantly speaking of my father's magnificence in my presence before company. Allowed to draw on him largely for pocket-money, I maintained my father's princely reputation in the school. At times, especially when the holidays arrived and I was left alone with Julia, I had fits of mournfulness, and almost thought the boys happier than I was. Going home began to seem an unattainable thing to me. Having a father, too, a regular father, instead of a dazzling angel that appeared at intervals, I considered a benefaction, in its way, some recompense to the boys, for their not possessing one like mine. My anxiety was relieved by my writing letters to my father, addressed to the care of Miss Julia Rippenger, and posting them in her work-basket. She favoured me with very funny replies, signed, 'Your own ever-loving Papa,' about his being engaged killing Bengal tigers and capturing white elephants, a noble occupation that gave me exciting and consolatory dreams of him.

We had at last a real letter of his, dated from a foreign city; but he mentioned nothing of coming to me. I understood that Mr. Rippenger was disappointed with it.

Gradually a kind of cloud stole over me. I no longer liked to ask for pocket-money; I was clad in a suit of plain cloth; I was banished from the parlour, and only on Sunday was I permitted to go to Julia. I ceased to live in myself. Through the whole course of lessons, at play-time, in my bed, and round to morning bell, I was hunting my father in an unknown country, generally with the sun setting before me: I ran out of a wood almost into a brook to see it sink as if I had again lost sight of him, and then a sense of darkness brought me back to my natural consciousness, without afflicting me much, but astonishing me. Why was I away from him? I could repeat my lessons in the midst of these dreams quite fairly; it was the awakening among the circle of the boys that made me falter during a recital and ask myself why I was there and he absent? They had given over speculating on another holiday and treat from my father; yet he had produced such an impression in the school that even when I had descended to the level of a total equality with them, they continued to have some consideration for me. I was able to talk of foreign cities and could tell stories, and I was, besides, under the immediate protection of Heriot. But now the shadow of a great calamity fell on me, for my dear Heriot announced his intention of leaving the school next half.

'I can't stand being prayed at, morning and evening, by a fellow who hasn't the pluck to strike me like a man,' he said. Mr. Rippenger had the habit of signalizing offenders, in his public prayers, as boys whose hearts he wished to be turned from callousness. He perpetually suspected plots; and to hear him allude to some deep, long-hatched school conspiracy while we knelt motionless on

the forms, and fetch a big breath to bring out, 'May the heart of Walter Heriot be turned and he comprehend the multitudinous blessings,' etc., was intensely distressing. Together with Walter Heriot, Andrew Saddlebank, our best bowler, the drollest fellow in the world, John Salter, and little Gus Temple, were oftenest cited. They declared that they invariably uttered 'Amen,' as Heriot did, but we none of us heard this defiant murmur of assent from their lips. Heriot pronounced it clearly and cheerfully, causing Julia's figure to shrink as she knelt with her face in the chair hard by her father's desk-pulpit. I received the hearty congratulations of my comrades for singing out 'Amen' louder than Heriot, like a chorister, though not in so prolonged a note, on hearing to my stupefaction Mr. Rippenger implore that the heart of 'him we know as Richmond Roy' might be turned. I did it spontaneously. Mr. Rippenger gazed at me in descending from his desk; Julia, too, looking grieved. For my part, I exulted in having done a thing that gave me a likeness to Heriot.

'Little Richmond, you 're a little hero,' he said, caressing me. 'I saw old Rippenger whisper to that beast, Boddy. Never mind; they won't hurt you as long as I 'm here. Grow tough, that 's what you 've got to do. I 'd like to see you horsed, only to see whether you 're game to take it without wincing—if it didn't hurt you much, little lad.'

He hugged me up to him.

'I 'd take anything for you, Heriot,' said I.

'All right,' he answered, never meaning me to suffer on his account. He had an inimitable manner of sweet-speaking that endeared him to younger boys capable of appreciating it, with the supernatural power of music. It endeared him, I suppose, to young women also. Julia repeated his phrases, as for instance, 'Silly boy, silly

boy,' spoken with a wave of his hand, when a little fellow thanked him for a kindness. She was angry at his approval of what she called my defiance of her father, and insisted that I was the catspaw of one of Heriot's plots to vex him.

'Tell Heriot you have my command to say you belong to me and must not be misled,' she said. His answer was that he wanted it in writing. She requested him to deliver up her previous letters. Thereupon he charged me with a lengthy epistle, which plunged us into boiling water. Mr. Boddy sat in the schoolroom while Heriot's pen was at work, on the wet Sunday afternoon. His keen little eyes were busy in his flat bird's head all the time Heriot continued writing. He saw no more than that Heriot gave me a book; but as I was marching away to Julia he called to know where I was going.

'To Miss Rippenger,' I replied.

'What have you there?'

'A book, sir.'

'Show me the book.'

I stood fast.

'It 's a book I have lent him, sir,' said Heriot, rising.

'I shall see if it 's a fit book for a young boy,' said Boddy; and before Heriot could interpose, he had knocked the book on the floor, and out fell the letter. Both sprang down to seize it: their heads encountered, but Heriot had the quicker hand; he caught the letter, and cried 'Off!' to me, as on another occasion. This time, however, he was not between me and the usher. I was seized by the collar, and shaken roughly.

'You will now understand that you are on a footing with the rest of the boys, you Roy,' said Boddy. 'Little scoundrelly spoilt urchins, upsetting the discipline of the school, won't do here. Heriot, here is your book. I regret,' he added, sneering, 'that a leaf is torn.'

'I regret, sir, that the poor boy was so savagely handled,' said Heriot.

He was warned to avoid insolence.

'Oh, as much Virgil as you like,' Heriot retorted; 'I know him by heart.'

It was past the hour of my customary visit to Julia, and she came to discover the reason of my delay. Boddy stood up to explain. Heriot went forward, saying, 'I think I 'm the one who ought to speak, Miss Rippenger. The fact is, I hear from little Roy that you are fond of tales of Indian adventure, and I gave him a book for you to read, if you like it. Mr. Boddy objected, and treated the youngster rather rigorously. It must have been quite a misunderstanding on his part. Here is the book: it 's extremely amusing.'

Julia blushed very red. She accepted the book with a soft murmur, and the sallow usher had not a word.

'Stay,' said Heriot. 'I took the liberty to write some notes. My father is an Indian officer, you know, and some of the terms in the book are difficult without notes. Richie, hand that paper. Here they are, Miss Rippenger, if you 'll be so kind as to place them in the book.'

I was hoping with all my might that she would not deny him. She did, and my heart sank.

'Oh, I can read it without notes,' she said, cheerfully.

After that, I listened with indifference to her petition to Boddy that I might be allowed to accompany her, and was not at all chagrined by his refusal. She laid down the book, saying that I could bring it to her when I was out of disgrace.

In the evening we walked in the playground, where Heriot asked me to do a brave thing, which he would never forget. This was that I should take a sharp run right past Boddy, who was pacing up and down before the gate leading into Julia's garden, and force her to receive the

letter. I went bounding like a ball. The usher, suspecting only that I hurried to speak to him, let me see how indignant he was with my behaviour by striding all the faster as I drew near, and so he passed the gate, and I rushed in. I had just time to say to Julia, 'Hide it, or I 'm in such a scrape.'

The next minute she was addressing my enemy: 'Surely you would not punish him because he loves me?' and he, though he spoke of insubordination, merited chastisement, and other usher phrases, seemed to melt, and I had what I believe was a primary conception of the power of woman. She led him to talk in the gentlest way possible of how the rain had refreshed her flowers, and of this and that poor rose.

I could think of nothing but the darling letter, which had flashed out of sight as a rabbit pops into burrows. Boddy departed with a rose.

'Ah, Richie,' she said, 'I have to pay to have you with me now.'

We walked to the summer-house, where she read Heriot's letter through. 'But he is a boy! How old is Heriot? He is not so old as I am!'

These were her words, and she read the letter anew, and read it again after she had placed it in her bosom, I meanwhile pouring out praises of Heriot.

'You speak of him as if you were in love with him, Richmond,' she said.

'And I do love him,' I answered.

'Not with me?' she asked.

'Yes, I do love you too, if you will not make him angry.'

'But do you know what it is he wants of me?'

I guessed: 'Yes; he wants you to let him sit close to you for half an hour.'

She said that he sat very near her in church.

'Ah,' said I, 'but he mustn't interrupt the sermon.'

She laughed, and mouthed me over with laughing kisses. 'There 's very little he hasn't daring enough for!'

We talked of his courage.

'Is he good as well?' said Julia, more to herself than to me; but I sang out,—

'Good! Oh, so kind!'

This appeared to convince her.

'Very generous to you and every one, is he not?' she said; and from that moment was all questions concerning his kind treatment of the boys, and as to their looking up to him.

I quitted her, taking her message to Heriot: 'You may tell him—tell him that I can't write.'

Heriot frowned on hearing me repeat it.

'Humph!' he went, and was bright in a twinkling: 'that means she 'll come!' He smacked his hands together, grew black, and asked, 'Did she give that beast Boddy a rose?'

I had to confess she did; and feeling a twinge of my treason to her, felt hers to Heriot.

'Humph!' he went; 'she shall suffer for that.'

All this was like music going on until the curtain should lift and reveal my father to me.

There was soon a secret to be read in Heriot's face for one who loved it as I did. Julia's betrayed nothing. I was not taken into their confidence, and luckily not; otherwise I fear I should have served them ill, I was so poor a dissembler and was so hotly plied with interrogations by the suspicious usher. I felt sure that Heriot and Julia met. His eyes were on her all through prayer-time, and hers wandered over the boys' heads till they rested on him, when they gave a short flutter and dropped, like a bird shot dead. The boys must have had some knowledge that love was busy in their midst, for they

spoke of Heriot and Julia as a jolly couple, and of Boddy as one meaning to play the part of old Nick the first opportunity. She was kinder to them than ever. It was not a new thing that she should send in cakes of her own making, but it was extraordinary that we should get these thoughtful presents as often as once a fortnight, and it became usual to hear a boy exclaim, either among a knot of fellows or to himself, 'By jingo, she is a pretty girl!' on her passing out of the room, and sometimes entirely of his own idea. I am persuaded that if she had consented to marry Boddy, the boys would have been seriously disposed to conspire to jump up in the church and forbid the banns. We should have preferred to hand her to the junior usher, Catman, of whom the rumour ran in the school that he once drank a bottle of wine and was sick after it, and he was therefore a weak creature to our minds; the truth of the rumour being confirmed by his pale complexion. That we would have handed our blooming princess to him was full proof of our abhorrence of Boddy. I might have thought with the other boys that she was growing prettier, only I never could imagine her so delicious as when she smiled at my father.

The consequence of the enlistment of the whole school in Heriot's interests was that at cricket-matches, picnics on the hills, and boating on the canal, Mr. Boddy was begirt with spies, and little Temple reported to Heriot a conversation that he, lying hidden in tall grass, had heard between Boddy and Julia. Boddy asked her to take private lessons in French from him. Heriot listened to the monstrous tale as he was on the point of entering Julia's boat, where Boddy sat beside her, and Heriot rowed stroke-oar. He dipped his blade, and said, loud enough to be heard by me in Catman's boat,—

'Do you think French useful in a military education, sir?'

And Boddy said, 'Yes, of course it is.'

Says Heriot, 'Then I think I shall take lessons.'

Boddy told him he was taking lessons in the school.

'Oh!' says Heriot, 'I mean private lessons'; and here he repeated one of Temple's pieces of communication: 'so much more can be imparted in a private lesson!'

Boddy sprang half up from his seat. 'Row, sir, and don't talk,' he growled.

'Sit, sir, and don't dance in the boat, if you please, or the lady will be overset,' said Heriot.

Julia requested to be allowed to land and walk home. Boddy caught the rudder lines and leapt on the bank to hand her out; then all the boys in her boat and in Catman's shouted, 'Miss Julia! dear Miss Julia, don't leave us!' and we heard wheedling voices: 'Don't go off with him alone!' Julia bade us behave well or she would not be able to come out with us. At her entreaty Boddy stepped back to his post, and the two boats went forward like swans that have done ruffling their feathers.

The boys were exceedingly disappointed that no catastrophe followed the events of the day. Heriot, they thought, might have upset the boat, saved Julia, and drowned Boddy, and given us a feast of pleasurable excitement: instead of which Boddy lived to harass us with his tyrannical impositions and spiteful slaps, and it was to him, not to our Heriot, that Julia was most gracious. Some of us discussed her conduct.

'She 's a coquette,' said little Temple. I went off to the French dictionary.

'Is Julia Rippenger a coquette, Heriot?' I asked him.

'Keep girls out of your heads, you little fellows,' said he, dealing me a smart thump.

'Is a coquette a nasty girl?' I persisted.

'No, a nice one, as it happens,' was his answer.

My only feeling was jealousy of the superior knowledge

of the sex possessed by Temple, for I could not fathom the meaning of coquette; but he had sisters. Temple and I walked the grounds together, mutually declaring how much we would forfeit for Heriot's sake. By this time my Sunday visits to Julia had been interdicted: I was plunged, as it were, in the pit of the school, and my dreams of my father were losing distinctness. A series of boxes on the ears from Boddy began to astound and transform me. Mr. Rippenger, too, threatened me with canings, though my offences were slight. 'Yes,' said Temple and I, in chorus, 'but you daren't strike Heriot!' This was our consolation, and the sentiment of the school. Fancy, then, our amazement to behold him laying the cane on Heriot's shoulders as fiercely as he could, and Boddy seconding him. The scene was terrible. We were all at our desks doing evening tasks for the morrow, a great match-day at cricket, Boddy watching over us, and bellowing, 'Silence at your work, you lazy fellows, if you want lessons to be finished at ten in the morning!' A noise came growing up to us from below, up the stairs from the wet-weather shed, and Heriot burst into the room, old Rippenger after him, panting.

'Mr. Boddy, you were right,' he cried, 'I find him a prowler, breaking all rules of discipline. A perverted, impudent rascal! An example shall be set to my school, sir. We have been falling lax. What! I find the puppy in my garden whistling—he confesses—for one of my servants . . . here, Mr. Boddy, if you please. My school shall see that none insult me with impunity!' He laid on Heriot like a wind on a bulrush. Heriot bent his shoulders a trifle, not his head.

'Hit away, sir,' he said, during the storm of blows, and I, through my tears, imagined him (or I do now) a young eagle forced to bear the thunder, but with his face to it. Then we saw Boddy lay hands on him, and in a

twinkling down pitched the usher, and the boys cheered —chirped, I should say, they exulted so, and merely sang out like birds, without any wilfulness of delight or defiance. After the fall of Boddy we had no sense of our hero suffering shame. Temple and I clutched fingers tight as long as the blows went on. We hoped for Boddy to make another attempt to touch Heriot; he held near the master, looking ready to spring, like a sallow panther; we kept hoping he would, in our horror of the murderous slashes of the cane; and not a syllable did Heriot utter. Temple and I started up, unaware of what we were going to do, or of anything until we had got a blow a-piece, and were in the thick of it, and Boddy had us both by the collars, and was knocking our heads together, as he dragged us back to our seats. But the boys told us we stopped the execution. Mr. Rippenger addressed us before he left the school-room. Saddlebank, Salter, and a good many others, plugged their ears with their fists. That night Boddy and Catman paced in the bed-chambers, to prevent plotting and conspiracy, they said. I longed to get my arms about Heriot, and thought of him, and dreamed of blood, and woke in the morning wondering what made me cry, and my arms and back very stiff. Heriot was gay as ever, but had fits of reserve; the word passed round that we were not to talk of yesterday evening. We feared he would refuse to play in the match.

'Why not?' said he, staring at us angrily. 'Has Saddlebank broken his arm, and can't bowl?'

No, Saddlebank was in excellent trim, though shame-faced, as was Salter, and most of the big boys were. They begged Heriot to let them shake his hand.

'Wait till we win our match,' said Heriot.

Julia did not appear at morning prayers.

'Ah,' said Temple, 'it 'd make her sick to hear old

Massacre praying.' It had nearly made him sick, he added, and I immediately felt that it had nearly made me sick.

We supposed we should not see Julia at the match. She came, however, and talked to everybody. I could not contain myself, I wanted so to tell her what had befallen Heriot overnight, while he was batting, and the whole ground cheering his hits. I on one side of her whispered—

'I say, Julia, my dear, I say, do you know . . .'

And Temple on the other: 'Miss Julia, I wish you 'd let me tell you . . .'

We longed to arouse her pity for Heriot at the moment she was admiring him, but she checked us, and as she was surrounded by ladies and gentlemen of the town, and particular friends of hers, we could not speak out. Heriot brought his bat to the booth for eighty-nine runs. His sleeve happened to be unbuttoned, and there, on his arm, was a mark of the cane.

'Look!' I said to Julia. But she looked at me.

'Richie, are you ill?'

She assured me I was very pale, and I felt her trembling excessively, and her parasol was covering us.

'Here, Roy, Temple,' we heard Heriot call; 'here, come here and bowl to me.'

I went and bowled till I thought my head was flying after the ball and getting knocks, it swam and throbbed so horribly.

Temple related that I fell, and was carried all the way from the cricket-field home by Heriot, who would not give me up to the usher. I was in Julia's charge three days. Every time I spoke of her father and Heriot, she cried, 'Oh, hush!' and had tears on her eyelids. When I was quite strong again, I made her hear me out. She held me and rocked over me like a green tree in the wind and rain.

'Was any name mentioned?' she asked, with her mouth working, and to my 'No,' said 'No, she knew there was none,' and seemed to drink and choke, and was one minute calm, all but a trembling hanging underlip, next smiling on me, and next having her face carved in grimaces by the jerking little tugs of her mouth, which I disliked to see, for she would say nothing of what she thought of Heriot, and I thought to myself, though I forbore to speak unkindly, 'It 's no use your making yourself look ugly, Julia.' If she had talked of Heriot, I should have thought that crying persons' kisses were agreeable.

On my return into the school, I found it in a convulsion of excitement, owing to Heriot's sending Boddy a challenge to fight a duel with pistols. Mr. Rippenger preached a sermon to the boys concerning the un-Christian spirit and hideous moral perversity of one who would even consent to fight a duel. How much more reprehensible, then, was one that could bring himself to defy a fellow-creature to mortal combat! We were not of his opinion; and as these questions are carried by majorities, we decided that Boddy was a coward, and approved the idea that Heriot would have to shoot or scourge him when the holidays came. Mr. Rippenger concluded his observations by remarking that the sharpest punishment he could inflict upon Heriot was to leave him to his own conscience; which he did for three days, and then asked him if he was in a fit state of mind to beg Mr. Boddy's pardon publicly.

'I 'm quite prepared to tell him what I think of him publicly, sir,' said Heriot.

A murmur of exultation passed through the school. Mr. Rippenger seized little Temple, and flogged him. Far from dreading the rod, now that Heriot and Temple had tasted it, I thought of punishment as a mad pleasure,

not a bit more awful than the burning furze-bush plunged into by our fellows in a follow-my-leader scamper on the common; so I caught Temple's hand as he went by me, and said, eagerly, 'Shall I sing out hurrah?'

'Bother it!' was Temple's answer, for he had taken a stinging dozen, and had a tender skin.

Mr. Rippenger called me up to him, to inform me, that whoever I was, and whatever I was, and I might be a little impostor foisted on his benevolence, yet he would bring me to a knowledge of myself: he gave me warning of it; and if my father objected to his method, my father must write word to that effect, and attend punctually to business duties, for Surrey House was not an almshouse, either for the sons of gentlemen of high connection, or for the sons of vagabonds. Mr. Rippenger added a spurning shove on my shoulder to his recommendation to me to resume my seat. I did not understand him at all. I was, in fact, indebted to a boy named Drew, a known sneak, for the explanation, in itself difficult to comprehend. It was, that Mr. Rippenger was losing patience because he had received no money on account of my boarding and schooling. The intelligence filled my head like the buzz of a fly, occupying my meditations without leading them anywhere. I spoke on the subject to Heriot.

'Oh, the sordid old brute!' said he of Mr. Rippenger. 'How can he know the habits and feelings of gentlemen? Your father 's travelling, and can't write, of course. My father 's in India, and I get a letter from him about once a year. We know one another, and I know he 's one of the best officers in the British army. It 's just the way with schoolmasters and tradesmen: they don't care whether a man is doing his duty to his country; he must attend to them, settle accounts with them—hang them! I 'll send you money, dear little lad, after I 've left.'

He dispersed my brooding fit. I was sure my father was a fountain of gold, and only happened to be travelling. Besides, Heriot's love for Julia, whom none of us saw now, was an incessant distraction. She did not appear at prayers. She sat up in the gallery at church, hardly to be spied. A letter that Heriot flung over the garden-wall for her was returned to him, open, enclosed by post.

'A letter for Walter Heriot,' exclaimed Mr. Boddy, lifting it high for Heriot to walk and fetch it; and his small eyes blinked when Heriot said aloud on his way, cheerfully,—

'A letter from the colonel in India!'

Boddy waited a minute, and then said, 'Is your father in good health?'

Heriot's face was scarlet. At first he stuttered, 'My father!—I hope so! What have you in common with him, sir?'

'You stated that the letter was from your father,' said Boddy.

'What if it is, sir?'

'Oh, in that case, nothing whatever to me.'

They talked on, and the youngest of us could perceive Boddy was bursting with devilish glee. Heriot got a letter posted to Julia. It was laid on his desk, with her name scratched completely out, and his put in its place. He grew pale and sad, but did his work, playing his games, and only letting his friends speak to him of lessons and play. His counsel to me was, that in spite of everything, I was always to stick to my tasks and my cricket. His sadness he could not conceal. He looked like an old lamp with a poor light in it. Not a boy in the school missed seeing how Boddy's flat head perpetually had a side-eye on him.

All this came to an end. John Salter's father lived on

the other side of the downs, and invited three of us to spend a day at his house. The selection included Heriot, Saddlebank, and me. Mr. Rippenger, not liking to refuse Mr. Salter, consented to our going, but pretended that I was too young. Salter said his mother and sisters very much wished to make my acquaintance. We went in his father's carriage. A jolly wind blew clouds and dust and leaves: I could have fancied I was going to my own father. The sensation of freedom had a magical effect on me, so that I was the wildest talker of them all. Even in the middle of the family I led the conversation; and I did not leave Salter's house without receiving an assurance from his elder sisters that they were in love with me. We drove home—back to prison, we called it—full of good things, talking of Salter's father's cellar of wine and of my majority Burgundy, which I said, believing it was true, amounted to twelve hundred dozen; and an appointment was made for us to meet at Dipwell Farm, to assist in consuming it, in my honour and my father's. That matter settled, I felt myself rolling over and over at a great rate, and clasping a juniper tree. The horses had trenched from the chalk road on to the downs. I had been shot out. Heriot and Salter had jumped out—Heriot to look after me; but Saddlebank and the coachman were driving at a great rate over the dark slope. Salter felt some anxiety concerning his father's horses, so we left him to pursue them, and walked on laughing, Heriot praising me for my pluck.

'I say good-bye to you to-night, Richie,' said he. 'We 're certain to meet again. I shall go to a military school. Mind you enter a cavalry regiment when you 're man enough. Look in the *Army List*, you 'll find me there. My aunt shall make a journey and call on you while you 're at Rippenger's, so you shan't be quite lonely.'

To my grief, I discovered that Heriot had resolved he would not return to school.

'You 'll get thrashed,' he said; 'I can't help it: I hope you 've grown tough by this time. I can't stay here. I feel more like a dog than a man in that house now. I 'll see you back safe. No crying, young cornet!'

We had lost the sound of the carriage. Heriot fell to musing. He remarked that the accident took away from Mr. Salter the responsibility of delivering him at Surrey House, but that he, Heriot, was bound, for Mr. Salter's sake, to conduct me to the doors; an unintelligible refinement of reasoning, to my wits. We reached our town between two and three in the morning. There was a ladder leaning against one of the houses in repair near the school. 'You are here, are you!' said Heriot, speaking to the ladder: 'you 'll do me a service—the last I shall want in the neighbourhood.' He managed to poise the ladder on his shoulder, and moved forward.

'Are we going in through the window?' I asked, seeing him fix the ladder against the school-house wall.

He said, 'Hush; keep a look-out.'

I saw him mount high. When he tapped at the window I remembered it was Julia's; I heard her cry out inside. The window rose slowly. Heriot spoke:—

'I have come to say good-bye to you, Julia, dear girl: don't be afraid of me.' She answered inaudibly to my ears. He begged her to come to him at once, only once, and hear him and take his hand. She was timid; he had her fingers first, then her whole arm, and she leaned over him. 'Julia, my sweet, dear girl,' he said; and she—

'Heriot, Walter, don't go—don't go; you do not care for me if you go. Oh, don't go.'

'We 've come to it,' said Heriot.

She asked why he was not in bed, and moaned on:

'Don't go.' I was speechless with wonder at the night and the scene. They whispered; I saw their faces close together, and Heriot's arms round her neck. 'Oh, Heriot, my darling, my Walter,' she said, crying, I knew by the sound of her voice.

'Tell me you love me,' said Heriot.

'I do, I do, only don't go,' she answered.

'Will you love me faithfully?'

'I will; I do.'

'Say, "I love you, Walter."'

'I love you, Walter.'

'For ever.'

'For ever. Oh! what a morning for me. Do you smell my honeysuckle? Oh, don't go away from me, Walter. Do you love me so?'

'I 'd go through a regiment of sabres to get at you.'

'But smell the night air; how sweet! oh, how sweet! No, not kiss me, if you are going to leave me; not kiss me, if you can be so cruel!'

'Do you dream of me in your bed?'

'Yes, every night.'

'God bless the bed!'

'Every night I dream of you. Oh! brave Heriot; dear, dear Walter, you did not betray me; my father struck you, and you let him for my sake. Every night I pray heaven to make you forgive him: I thought you would hate me. I cried till I was glad you could not see me. Look at those two little stars; no, they hurt me, I can't look at them ever again. But no, you are not going; you want to frighten me. Do smell the flowers. Don't make them poison to me. Oh, what a morning for me when you 're lost! And me, to look out on the night alone! No, no more kisses! Oh, yes, I will kiss you, dear.'

Heriot said, 'Your mother was Irish, Julia.'

'Yes. She would have loved you.'

'I 've Irish blood too. Give me her portrait. It 's the image of you.'

'To take away? Walter! not to take it away?'

'You darling! to keep me sure of you.'

'Part with my mother's portrait?'

'Why, yes, if you love me one bit.'

'But you are younger than me, Heriot.'

'Then good-night, good-bye, Julia.'

'Walter, I will fetch it.'

Heriot now told her I was below, and she looked down on me and called my name softly, sending kisses from her fingers while he gave the cause for our late return.

'Some one must be sitting up for you—are we safe?' she said.

Heriot laughed, and pressed for the portrait.

'It is all I have. Why should you not have it? I want to be remembered.'

She sobbed as she said this and disappeared. Heriot still talked into her room. I thought I heard a noise of the garden-door opening. A man came out rushing at the ladder. I called in terror: 'Mr. Boddy, stop, sir.' He pushed me savagely aside, pitching his whole force against the ladder. Heriot pulled down Julia's window; he fell with a heavy thump on the ground, and I heard a shriek above. He tried to spring to his feet, but dropped, supported himself on one of his hands, and cried:—

'All right; no harm done; how do you do, Mr. Boddy? I thought I 'd try one of the attics, as we were late, not to disturb the house. I 'm not hurt, I tell you,' he cried as loud as he could.

The usher's words were in a confusion of rage and inquiries. He commanded Heriot to stand on his legs, abused him, asked him what he meant by it, accused

him of depravity, of crime, of disgraceful conduct, and attempted to pluck him from the spot.

'Hands off me,' said Heriot; 'I can help myself. The youngster 'll help me, and we 'll go round to the front door. I hope, sir, you will behave like a gentleman; make no row here, Mr. Boddy, if you 've any respect for people inside. We were upset by Mr. Salter's carriage; it 's damaged my leg, I believe. Have the goodness, sir, to go in by your road, and we 'll go round and knock at the front door in the proper way. We shall have to disturb the house after all.'

Heriot insisted. I was astonished to see Boddy obey him and leave us, after my dear Heriot had hopped with his hand on my shoulder to the corner of the house fronting the road. While we were standing alone a light cart drove by. Heriot hailed it, and hopped up to the driver.

'Take me to London, there 's a good fellow,' he said; 'I 'm a gentleman; you needn't look fixed. I 'll pay you well and thank you. But quick. Haul me up, up; here 's my hand. By jingo! this is pain.'

The man said, 'Scamped it out of school, sir?'

Heriot replied: 'Mum. Rely on me when I tell you I 'm a gentleman.'

'Well, if I pick up a gentleman, I can't be doing a bad business,' said the man, hauling him in tenderly.

Heriot sung to me in his sweet manner, 'Good-bye, little Richie. Knock when five minutes are over. God bless you, dear little lad! Leg 'll get well by morning, never fear for me; and we 'll meet somehow; we 'll drink the Burgundy. No crying. Kiss your hand to me.'

I kissed my hand to him. I had no tears to shed; my chest kept heaving enormously. My friend was gone. I stood in the road straining to hear the last of the wheels after they had long been silent.

CHAPTER VI

A TALE OF A GOOSE

From that hour till the day Heriot's aunt came to see me, I lived systematically out of myself in extreme flights of imagination, locking my doors up, as it were, all the faster for the extremest strokes of Mr. Rippenger's rod. He remarked justly that I grew an impenetrably sullen boy, a constitutional rebel, a callous lump: and assured me that if my father would not pay for me, I at least should not escape my debts. The title of little impostor, transmitted from the master's mouth to the school in designation of one who had come to him as a young prince, and for whom he had not received one penny's indemnification, naturally caused me to have fights with several of the boys. Whereupon I was reported: I was prayed at to move my spirit, and flogged to exercise my flesh. The prayers I soon learnt to laugh to scorn. The floggings, after they were over, crowned me with delicious sensations of martyrdom. Even while the sting lasted I could say, it 's for Heriot and Julia! and it gave me a wonderful penetration into the mournful ecstasy of love. Julia was sent away to a relative by the sea-side, because, one of the housemaids told me, she could not bear to hear of my being beaten. Mr. Rippenger summoned me to his private room to bid me inform him whether I had other relatives besides my father, such as grandfather, grandmother, uncles, or aunts, or a mother. I dare say Julia would have led me to break my word to my father by speaking of old Riversley, a place I half longed for since my father had grown so distant and dim to me; but confession to Mr. Rippenger seemed, as he said of Heriot's behaviour to him, a gross

breach of trust to my father; so I refused steadily to answer, and suffered the consequences now on my dear father's behalf.

Heriot's aunt brought me a cake, and in a letter from him an extraordinary sum of money for a boy of my age. He wrote that he knew I should want it to pay my debts for treats to the boys and keep them in good humour. He believed also that his people meant to have me for the Christmas holidays. The sum he sent me was five pounds, carefully enclosed. I felt myself a prince again. The money was like a golden gate through which freedom twinkled a finger. Forthwith I paid my debts, amounting to two pounds twelve shillings, and instructed a couple of day-boarders, commercial fellows, whose heavy and mysterious charges for commissions ran up a bill in no time, to prepare to bring us materials for a feast on Saturday. Temple abominated the trading propensities of these boys. 'They never get licked and they 've always got money, at least I know they always get mine,' said he; 'but you and I and Heriot despise them.' Our position toward them was that of an encumbered aristocracy, and really they paid us great respect. The fact was that, when they had trusted us, they were compelled to continue obsequious, for Heriot had instilled the sentiment in the school, that gentlemen never failed to wipe out debts in the long run, so it was their interest to make us feel they knew us to be gentlemen, who were at some time or other sure to pay, and thus also they operated on our consciences. From which it followed that one title of superiority among us, ranking next in the order of nobility to the dignity conferred by Mr. Rippenger's rod, was the being down in their books. Temple and I walked in the halo of unlimited credit like more than mortal twins. I gave an order for four bottles of champagne.

On the Friday evening Catman walked out with us. His studious habits endeared him to us immensely, owing to his having his head in his book on all occasions, and a walk under his superintendence was first cousin to liberty. Some boys roamed ahead, some lagged behind, while Catman turned over his pages, sounding the return only when it grew dark. The rumour of the champagne had already intoxicated the boys. There was a companion and most auspicious rumour that Boddy was going to be absent on Saturday. If so, we said, we may drink our champagne under Catman's nose and he be none the wiser. Saddlebank undertook to manage our feast for us. Coming home over the downs, just upon twilight, Temple and I saw Saddlebank carrying a long withy upright. We asked him what it was for. He shouted back: 'It 's for fortune. You keep the rear guard.' Then we saw him following a man and a flock of geese, and imitating the action of the man with his green wand. As we were ready to laugh at anything Saddlebank did, we laughed at this. The man walked like one half asleep, and appeared to wake up now and then to find that he was right in the middle of his geese, and then he waited, and Saddlebank waited behind him. Presently the geese passed a lane leading off the downs. We saw Saddlebank duck his wand in a coaxing way, like an angler dropping his fly for fish; he made all sorts of curious easy flourishes against the sky and branched up the lane. We struck after him, little suspecting that he had a goose in front, but he had; he had cut one of the loiterers off from the flock; and to see him handle his wand on either side his goose, encouraging it to go forward, and remonstrating, and addressing it in bits of Latin, and the creature pattering stiff and astonished, sent us in a dance of laughter.

'What have you done, old Saddle?' said Temple,

though it was perfectly clear what Saddlebank had done.

'I 've carved off a slice of Michaelmas,' said Saddlebank, and he hewed the air to flick delicately at his goose's head.

'What do you mean—a slice?' said we.

We wanted to be certain the goose was captured booty. Saddlebank would talk nothing but his fun. Temple fetched a roaring sigh:

'Oh! how good this goose 'd be with our champagne.'

The idea seized and enraptured me. 'Saddlebank, I 'll buy him off you,' I said.

'Chink won't flavour him,' said Saddlebank, still at his business: 'here, you two, cut back by the down and try all your might to get a dozen apples before Catman counts heads at the door, and you hold your tongues.'

We shot past the man with the geese—I pitied him—clipped a corner of the down, and by dint of hard running reached the main street, mad for apples, before Catman appeared there. Apples, champagne, and cakes were now provided; all that was left to think of was the goose. We glorified Saddlebank's cleverness to the boys.

'By jingo! what a treat you 'll have,' Temple said among them, bursting with our secret.

Saddlebank pleaded that he had missed his way on presenting himself ten minutes after time. To me and Temple he breathed of goose, but he shunned us; he had no fun in him till Saturday afternoon, when Catman called out to hear if we were for cricket or a walk.

'A walk on the downs,' said Saddlebank.

Temple and I echoed him, and Saddlebank motioned his hand as though he were wheedling his goose along. Saddlebank spoke a word to my commissioners. I was to leave the arrangements for the feast to him, he said. John Salter was at home unwell, so Saddlebank was

chief. No sooner did we stand on the downs than he gathered us all in a circle, and taking off his cap threw in it some slips of paper. We had to draw lots who should keep by Catman out of twenty-seven; fifteen blanks were marked. Temple dashed his hand into the cap first. 'Like my luck,' he remarked, and pocketed both fists as he began strutting away to hide his desperation at drawing a blank. I bought a substitute for him at the price of half-a-crown,—Drew, a fellow we were glad to get rid of; he wanted five shillings. The feast was worth fifty, but to haggle about prices showed the sneak. He begged us to put by a taste for him; he was groaned out of hearing. The fifteen looked so wretched when they saw themselves divided from us that I gave them a shilling a-piece to console them. They took their instructions from Saddlebank as to how they were to surround Catman, and make him fancy us to be all in his neighbourhood; and then we shook hands, they requesting us feebly to drink their healths, and we saying, ay, that we would.

Temple was in distress of spirits because of his having been ignominiously bought off. Saddlebank, however, put on such a pace that no one had leisure for melancholy. 'I 'll get you fellows up to boiling point,' said he. There was a tremendously hot sun overhead. On a sudden he halted, exclaiming: 'Cooks and gridirons! what about sage and onions?' Only Temple and I jumped at the meaning of this. We drew lots for a messenger, and it was miserable to behold an unfortunate fellow touch Saddlebank's hand containing the notched bit of stick, and find himself condemned to go and buy sage and onions somewhere, without knowing what it was for:—how could he guess we were going to cook a raw goose! The lot fell to a boy named Barnshed, a big slow boy, half way up every class he was in, but utterly stupid out

of school; which made Saddlebank say: 'They 'll take it he 's the bird that wants stuffing.' Barnshed was directed where to rejoin us. The others asked why he was trotted after sage and onions. 'Because he 's an awful goose,' said Saddlebank.

Temple and I thought the word was out and hurrahed, and back came Barnshed. We had a task in persuading him to resume his expedition, as well as Saddlebank to forgive us. Saddlebank's anger was excessive. We conciliated him by calling him captain, and pretending to swear an oath of allegiance. He now led us through a wood on to some fields down to a shady dell, where we were to hold the feast in privacy. He did not descend it himself. Vexatious as it was to see a tramp's tent there, we nevertheless acknowledged the respectful greeting of the women and the man with a few questions about tent-pegs, pots, and tin mugs. Saddlebank remained aloft, keeping a look-out for the day-school fellows, Chaunter, Davis, and Bystop, my commissioners. They did not keep us waiting long. They had driven to the spot in a cart, according to Saddlebank's directions. Our provisions were in three large hampers. We praised their forethought loudly at the sight of an extra bottle of champagne, with two bottles of ginger-wine, two of currant, two of raisin, four pint bottles of ale, six of ginger-beer, a Dutch cheese, a heap of tarts, three sally-lunns, and four shillingsworth of toffy. Temple and I joined our apples to the mass: a sight at which some of the boys exulted aloud. The tramp-women insisted on spreading things out for us: ten yards off their children squatted staring: the man smoked and chaffed us.

At last Saddlebank came running over the hill-side, making as if he meant to bowl down what looked a black body of a baby against the sky, and shouting, 'See, you fellows, here 's a find!' He ran through us, swinging

his goose up to the hampers, saying that he had found the goose under a furze-bush. While the words were coming out of his mouth, he saw the tramps, and the male tramp's eyes and his met.

The man had one eyebrow and his lips at one corner screwed in a queer lift: he winked slowly. 'Odd! ain't it?' he said.

Saddlebank shouldered round on us, and cried, 'Confound you fellows! here 's a beastly place you 've pitched upon.' His face was the colour of scarlet in patches.

'Now, I call it a beautiful place,' said the man, 'and if you finds gooses hereabouts growing ready for the fire, all but plucking, why, it 's a bountiful place, I call it.'

The women tried to keep him silent. But for them we should have moved our encampment. 'Why, of course, young gentlemen, if you want to eat the goose, we 'll pluck it for you and cook it for you, all nice,' they said. 'How can young gentlemen do that for theirselves?'

It was clear to us we must have a fire for the goose. Certain observations current among us about the necessity to remove the goose's inside, and not to lose the giblets, which even the boy who named them confessed his inability to recognize, inclined the majority to accept the woman's proposal. Saddlebank said it was on our heads, then.

To revive his good humour, Temple uncorked a bottle of champagne. The tramp-woman lent us a tin mug, and round it went. One boy said, 'That 's a commencement'; another said, 'Hang old Rippenger.' Temple snapped his fingers, and Bystop, a farmer's son, said, 'Well, now I 've drunk champagne; I meant to before I died!' Most of the boys seemed puzzled by it. As for

me, my heart sprang up in me like a colt turned out of stables to graze. I determined that the humblest of my retainers should feed from my table, and drink to my father's and Heriot's honour, and I poured out champagne for the women, who just sipped, and the man, who vowed he preferred beer. A spoonful of the mashed tarts I sent to each of the children. Only one, the eldest, a girl about a year older than me, or younger, with black eyebrows and rough black hair, refused to eat or drink.

'Let her bide, young gentlemen,' said a woman; 'she 's a regular obstinate, once she sets in for it.'

'Ah!' said the man, 'I 've seen pigs druv, and I 've seen iron bent double. She 's harder 'n both, once she takes 't into her head.'

'By jingo, she 's pig-iron!' cried Temple, and sighed, 'Oh, dear old Heriot!'

I flung myself beside him to talk of our lost friend.

A great commotion stirred the boys. They shrieked at beholding their goose vanish in a pot for stewing. They wanted roast-goose, they exclaimed, not boiled; who cared for boiled goose! But the woman asked them how it was possible to roast a goose on the top of wood-flames, where there was nothing to hang it by, and nothing would come of it except smoked bones!

The boys groaned in consternation, and Saddlebank sowed discontent by grumbling, 'Now you see what your jolly new acquaintances have done for you.'

So we played at catch with the Dutch cheese, and afterwards bowled it for long-stopping, when, to the disgust of Saddlebank and others, down ran the black-haired girl and caught the ball clean at wicket-distance. As soon as she had done it she was ashamed, and slunk away.

The boys called out, 'Now, then, pig-iron!'

One fellow enraged me by throwing an apple that hit

her in the back. We exchanged half-a-dozen blows, whereupon he consented to apologize, and roared, 'Hulloa, pig-iron, sorry if I hurt you.'

Temple urged me to insist on the rascal's going on his knees for flinging at a girl.

'Why,' said Chaunter, 'you were the first to call her pig-iron.'

Temple declared he was a blackguard if he said that. I made the girl take a piece of toffy.

'Aha!' Saddlebank grumbled, 'this comes of the precious company you would keep in spite of my caution.'

The man told us to go it, for he liked to observe young gentlemen enjoying themselves. Temple tossed him a pint bottle of beer, with an injunction to him to shut his trap.

'Now, you talk my mother tongue,' said the man; 'you 're what goes by the name of a learned gentleman. Thank ye, sir. You 'll be a counsellor some day.'

'I won't get off thieves, I can tell you,' said Temple. He was the son of a barrister.

'Nor you won't help cook their gooses for them, may be,' said the man. 'Well, kindness is kindness, all over the world.'

The women stormed at him to command him not to anger the young gentlemen, for Saddlebank was swearing awfully in an undertone. He answered them that he was the mildest lamb afloat.

Despairing of the goose, we resolved to finish the cold repast awaiting us. The Dutch cheese had been bowled into bits. With a portion of the mashed tarts on it, and champagne, it tasted excellently; toffy to follow. Those boys who chose ginger-wine had it, and drank, despised. The ginger-beer and ale, apples and sally-lunns, were reserved for supper. My mind became like

a driving sky, with glimpses of my father and Heriot bursting through.

'If I 'm not a prince, I 'm a nobleman,' I said to Temple.

He replied, 'Army or Navy. I don't much care which. We 're sure of a foreign war some time. Then you 'll see fellows rise: lieutenant, captain, colonel, General—quick as barrels popping at a bird. I should like to be Governor of Gibraltar.'

'I 'll come and see you, Temple,' said I.

'Done! old Richie,' he said, grasping my hand warmly.

'The truth is, Temple,' I confided to him, 'I 've an uncle—I mean a grandfather—of enormous property; he owns half Hampshire, I believe, and hates my father like poison. I won't stand it. You 've seen my father, haven't you? Gentlemen never forget their servants, Temple. Let 's drink lots more champagne. I wish you and I were knights riding across that country there, as they used to, and you saying, "I wonder whether your father 's at home in the castle expecting our arrival."'

'The Baron!' said Temple. 'He 's like a Baron, too. His health. Your health, sir! It 's just the wine to drink it in, Richie. He 's one of the men I look up to. It 's odd he never comes to see you, because he 's fond of you; the right sort of father! Big men can't be always looking after little boys. Not that we 're so young, though, now. Lots of fellows of our age have done things fellows write about. I feel——' Temple sat up swelling his chest to deliver an important sentiment; 'I feel uncommonly thirsty.'

So did I. We attributed it to the air of the place, Temple going so far as to say that it came off the chalk, which somehow stuck in the throat.

'Saddleback, don't look glum,' said Temple. 'Lord, Richie, you should hear my father plead in Court with his wig on. They used to say at home I was a clever boy when I was a baby. Saddleback, you 've looked glum all the afternoon.'

'Treat your superiors respectfully,' Saddlebank retorted.

The tramp was irritating him. That tramp had never left off smoking and leaning on his arm since we first saw him. Two boys named Hackman and Montague, not bad fellows, grew desirous of a whiff from his pipe. They had it, and lay down silent, back to back. Bystop was led away in a wretched plight. Two others, Paynter and Ashworth, attacked the apples, rendered desperate by thirst. Saddlebank repelled them furiously. He harangued those who might care to listen.

'You fellows, by George! you shall eat the goose, I tell you. You 've spoilt everything, and I tell you, whether you like it or not, you shall have apples with it, and sage and onions too. I don't ask for thanks. And I propose to post outposts in the wood to keep watch.'

He wanted us to draw lots again. His fun had entirely departed from him; all he thought of was seeing the goose out of the pot. I had a feeling next to hatred for one who could talk of goose. Temple must have shared it.

'We 've no real captain now dear old Heriot 's gone,' he said. 'The school 's topsy-turvy: we 're like a lot of things rattled in a box. Oh, dear! how I do like a good commander. On he goes, you after him, never mind what happens.'

A pair of inseparable friends, Happitt and Larkins, nicknamed Happy-go-Lucky, were rolling arm-in-arm, declaring they were perfectly sober, and, for a proof of it, trying to direct their feet upon a lump of chalk, and marching, and missing it. Up came Chaunter to them:

'Fat goose!' he said—no more. Both the boys rushed straight as far as they could go; both sung out, 'I 'm done!' and they were.

Temple and I contemplated these proceedings as matters belonging to the ordinary phenomena of feasting. We agreed that gentlemen were always the last to drop, and were assured, therefore, of our living out the field; but I dreaded the moment of the goose's appearance, and I think he did also. Saddlebank's pertinacity in withholding the cool ginger-beer and the apples offended us deeply; we should have conspired against him had we reposed confidence in our legs and our tongues.

Twilight was around us. The tramp-children lay in little bundles in one tent; another was being built by the women and the girl. Overhead I counted numbers of stars, all small; and lights in the valley—lights of palaces to my imagination. Stars and tramps seemed to me to go together. Houses imprisoned us, I thought: a lost father was never to be discovered by remaining in them. Plunged among dark green leaves, smelling wood-smoke, at night; at morning waking up, and the world alight, and you standing high, and marking the hills where you will see the next morning and the next, morning after morning, and one morning the dearest person in the world surprising you just before you wake: I thought this a heavenly pleasure. But, observing the narrowness of the tents, it struck me there would be snoring companions. I felt so intensely sensitive, that the very idea of a snore gave me tremours and qualms: it was associated with the sense of fat. Saddlebank had the lid of the pot in his hand; we smelt the goose, and he cried, 'Now for supper; now for it! Halloa, you fellows!'

'Bother it, Saddlebank, you 'll make Catman hear you,' said Temple, wiping his forehead.

I perspired coldly.

'Catman! He 's been at it for the last hour and a half,' Saddlebank replied.

One boy ran up: he was ready, and the only one who was. Presently Chaunter rushed by.

'Barnshed 's in custody; I 'm away home,' he said, passing.

We stared at the black opening of the dell.

'Oh, it 's Catman; we don't mind him,' Saddlebank reassured us; but we heard ominous voices, and perceived people standing over a prostrate figure. Then we heard a voice too well known to us. It said, 'The explanation of a pupil in your charge, Mr. Catman, being sent barefaced into the town—a scholar of mine—for sage and onions . . .'

'Old Rippenger!' breathed Temple.

We sat paralyzed. Now we understood the folly of despatching a donkey like Barnshed for sage and onions.

'Oh, what asses we have been!' Temple continued. 'Come along—we run for it! Come along, Richie! They 're picking up the fellows like windfalls.'

I told him I would not run for it; in fact, I distrusted my legs; and he was staggering, answering Saddlebank's reproaches for having come among tramps.

'Temple, I see you, sir!' called Mr. Rippenger. Poor Temple had advanced into the firelight.

With the instinct to defeat the master, I crawled in the line of the shadows to the farther side of a tent, where I felt a hand clutch mine. 'Hide me,' said I; and the curtain of the tent was raised. After squeezing through boxes and straw, I lay flat, covered by a mat smelling of abominable cheese, and felt a head outside it on my chest. Several times Mr. Rippenger pronounced my name in the way habitual to him in anger: 'Rye!'

Temple's answer was inaudible to me. Saddlebank

spoke, and other boys, and the man and the woman. Then a light was thrust in the tent, and the man said, 'Me deceive you, sir! See for yourself, to satisfy yourself. Here 's our little uns laid warm, and a girl there, head on the mat, going down to join her tribe at Lipcombe, and one of our women sleeps here, and all told. But for you to suspect me of combining——Thank ye, sir. You 've got my word as a man.'

The light went away. My chest was relieved of the weight on it. I sat up, and the creature who had been kind to me laid mat and straw on the ground, and drew my head on her shoulder, where I slept fast.

CHAPTER VII

A FREE LIFE ON THE ROAD

I WOKE very early, though I had taken kindly to my pillow, as I found by my having an arm round my companion's neck, and her fingers intertwisted with mine. For awhile I lay looking at her eyes, which had every imaginable light and signification in them; they advised me to lie quiet, they laughed at my wonder, they said, 'Dear little fellow!' they flashed as from under a cloud, darkened, flashed out of it, seemed to dip in water and shine, and were sometimes like a view into a forest, sometimes intensely sunny, never quite still. I trusted her, and could have slept again, but the sight of the tent stupefied me; I fancied the sky had fallen, and gasped for air; my head was extremely dizzy too; not one idea in it was kept from wheeling. This confusion of my head flew to my legs when, imitating her, I rose to go forth. In a fit of horror I thought, 'I 've forgotten how to walk!'

Summoning my manful resolution, I made the attempt to step across the children swaddled in matting and straw and old gowns or petticoats. The necessity for doing it with a rush seized me after the first step. I pitched over one little bundle, right on to the figure of a sleeping woman. All she did was to turn round, murmuring, 'Naughty Jackie.' My companion pulled me along gravely, and once in the air, with a good breath of it in my chest, I felt tall and strong, and knew what had occurred. The tent where I had slept struck me as more curious than my own circumstances. I lifted my face to the sky; it was just sunrise, beautiful; bits of long and curling cloud brushed any way close on the blue, and rosy and white, deliciously cool; the grass was all grey, our dell in shadow, and the tops of the trees burning, a few birds twittering.

I sucked a blade of grass.

'I wish it was all water here,' I said.

'Come and have a drink and a bathe,' said my companion.

We went down the dell and over a juniper slope, reminding me of my day at John Salter's house and the last of dear Heriot. Rather to my shame, my companion beat me at running; she was very swift, and my legs were stiff.

'Can you swim?' she asked me.

'I can row, and swim, and fence, and ride, and fire a pistol,' I said.

'Oh, dear,' said she, after eyeing me enviously. I could see that I had checked a recital of her accomplishments.

We arrived at a clear stream in a gentleman's park, where grass rolled smooth as sea-water on a fine day, and cows and horses were feeding.

'I can catch that horse and mount him,' she said.

I was astonished.

'Straddle?'

She nodded down for 'Yes.'

'No saddle?'

She nodded level for 'No.'

My respect for her returned. But she could not swim.

'Only up to my knees,' she confessed.

'Have a look at me,' said I; and I stripped and shot into the water, happy as a fish, and thinking how much nicer it was than champagne. My enjoyment made her so envious that she plucked off her stockings, and came in as far as she dared. I called to her. 'You 're like a cow,' and she showed her teeth, bidding me not say that.

'A cow! a cow!' I repeated, in my superior pleasure.

She spun out in a breath, 'If you say that, I 'll run away with every bit of your clothes, and you 'll come out and run about naked, you will.'

'Now I float,' was my answer, 'now I dive'; and when I came up she welcomed me with a big bright grin.

A smart run in the heat dried me. I dressed, finding half my money on the grass. She asked me to give her one of those bits—a shilling. I gave her two, upon which she asked me, invitingly, if ever I tossed. I replied that I never tossed for money; but she had caught a shilling, and I could not resist guessing 'heads,' and won; the same with her second shilling. She handed them to me sullenly, sobbing, yet she would not take them back.

'By-and-by you give me another two,' she said, growing lively again.

We agreed that it would be a good thing if we entered the village and bought something. None of the shops were open. We walked through the churchyard. I said, 'Here 's where dead people are buried.'

'I 'll dance if you talk about dead people,' said she,

and began whooping at the pitch of her voice. On my wishing to know why she did it, her reply was that it was to make the dead people hear. My feelings were strange: the shops not open, and no living people to be seen. We climbed trees, and sat on a branch talking of birds' eggs till hunger drove us to the village street, where, near the public-house, we met the man-tramp, who whistled.

He was rather amusing. He remarked that he put no questions to me, because he put no question to anybody, because answers excited him about subjects that had no particular interest to him, and did not benefit him to the extent of a pipe of tobacco; and all through not being inquisitive, yesterday afternoon he had obtained, as if it had been chucked into his lap, a fine-flavoured fat goose honourably for his supper, besides bottles of ale, bottles of ginger-pop, and a fair-earned half-crown. That was through his not being inquisitive, and he was not going to be inquisitive now, knowing me for a gentleman: my master had tipped him half-a-crown.

Fortunately for him, and perhaps for my liberty, he employed a verb marvellously enlightening to a schoolboy. I tipped him another half-crown. He thanked me, observing that there were days when you lay on your back and the sky rained apples; while there were other days when you wore your fingers down to the first joint to catch a flea. Such was Fortune!

In a friendly manner he advised me to go to school; if not there, then to go home. My idea, which I had only partly conceived, was to have a look at Riversley over a hedge, kiss my aunt Dorothy unaware, and fly subsequently in search of my father. Breakfast, however, was my immediate thought. He and the girl sat down to breakfast at the inn as my guests. We ate mutton-chops and eggs, and drank coffee. After it, though I

had no suspicions, I noticed that the man grew thoughtful. He proposed to me, supposing I had no objection against slow travelling, to join company for a couple of days, if I was for Hampshire, which I stated was the county I meant to visit.

'Well then, here now, come along, d'ye see, look,' said he, 'I mustn't be pounced on, and no missing young gentleman in my society, and me took half-a-crown for his absence; that won't do. You get on pretty well with the gal, and that 's a screaming farce: none of us do. Lord! she looks down on such scum as us. She 's gipsy blood, true sort; everything 's sausages that gets into their pockets, no matter what it was when it was out. Well then, now, here, you and the gal go t' other side o' Bed'lming, and you wait for us on the heath, and we 'll be there to comfort ye 'fore dark. Is it a fister?'

He held out his hand; I agreed; and he remarked that he now counted a breakfast in the list of his gains from never asking questions.

I was glad enough to quit the village in a hurry, for the driver of the geese, or a man dreadfully resembling him, passed me near the public-house, and attacked my conscience on the cowardly side, which is, I fear, the first to awaken, and always the liveliest half while we are undisciplined. I would have paid him money, but the idea of a conversation with him indicated the road back to school. My companion related her history. She belonged to a Hampshire gipsy tribe, and had been on a visit to a relative down in the East counties, who died on the road, leaving her to be brought home by these tramps: she called them mumpers, and made faces when she spoke of them. Gipsies, she said, were a different sort: gipsies camped in gentlemen's parks; gipsies, horses, fiddles, and the wide world—that was what she liked. The wide world she described as a

heath, where you looked and never saw the end of it. I let her talk on. For me to talk of my affairs to a girl without bonnet and boots would have been absurd. Otherwise, her society pleased me: she was so like a boy, and unlike any boy I knew.

My mental occupation on the road was to calculate how many hill-tops I should climb before I beheld Riversley. The Sunday bells sounded homely from village to village as soon as I was convinced that I heard no bells summoning boarders to Rippenger's school. The shops in the villages continued shut; however, I told the girl they should pay me for it next day, and we had an interesting topic in discussing as to the various things we would buy. She was for bright ribands and draper's stuff, I for pastry and letter-paper. The smell of people's dinners united our appetites. Going through a village I saw a man carrying a great baked pie, smelling overpoweringly, so that to ask him his price for it was a natural impulse with me. 'What! sell my Sunday dinner?' he said, and appeared ready to drop the dish. Nothing stopped his staring until we had finished a plateful a-piece and some beer in his cottage among his family. He wanted to take me in alone. 'She 's a common tramp,' he said of the girl.

'That 's a lie,' she answered.

Of course I would not leave her hungry outside, so in the end he reluctantly invited us both, and introduced us to his wife.

'Here 's a young gentleman asks a bit o' dinner, and a young I-d'n-know-what 's after the same; I leaves it to you, missus.'

His wife took it off his shoulders in good humour, saying it was lucky she made the pie big enough for her family and strays. They would not accept more than a shilling for our joint repast. The man said that was

the account to a farthing, if I was too proud to be a poor man's guest, and insisted on treating him like a public. Perhaps I would shake hands at parting? I did cordially, and remembered him when people were not so civil. They wanted to know whether we had made a runaway match of it. The fun of passing a boys'-school and hearing the usher threaten to punish one fellow for straying from ranks, entertained me immensely. I laughed at them just as the stupid people we met laughed at me, which was unpleasant for the time; but I knew there was not a single boy who would not have changed places with me, only give him the chance, though my companion was a gipsy girl, and she certainly did look odd company for a gentleman's son in a tea-garden and public-house parlour. At nightfall, however, I was glad of her and she of me, and we walked hand in hand. I narrated tales of Roman history. It was very well for her so say, 'I 'll mother you,' as we lay down to sleep; I discovered that she would never have hooted over churchyard graves in the night. She confessed she believed the devil went about in the night. Our bed was a cart under a shed, our bed-clothes fern-leaves and armfuls of straw. The shafts of the cart were down, so we lay between upright and level, and awakening in the early light I found our four legs hanging over the seat in front. 'How you have been kicking!' said I. She accused me of the same. Next minute she pointed over the side of the cart, and I saw the tramp's horse and his tents beneath a broad roadside oak-tree. Her face was comical, just like a boy's who thinks he has escaped and is caught. 'Let 's run,' she said. Preferring positive independence, I followed her, and then she told me that she had overheard the tramp last night swearing I was as good as a fistful of half-crowns lost to him if he missed me. The image of Rippenger's school

overshadowed me at this communication. With some melancholy I said: 'You 'll join your friends, won't you?'

She snapped her fingers: 'Mumpers!' and walked on carelessly.

We were now on the great heaths. They brought the memory of my father vividly; the smell of the air half inclined me to turn my steps toward London, I grew so full of longing for him. Nevertheless I resolved to have one gaze at Riversley, my aunt Dorothy, and Sewis, the old grey-brown butler, and the lamb that had grown a sheep; wonderful contrasts to my grand kings of England career. My first clear recollection of Riversley was here, like an outline of a hill seen miles away. I might have shed a tear or two out of love for my father, had not the thought that I was a very queer boy displaced his image. I could not but be a very queer boy, such a lot of things happened to me. Suppose I joined the gipsies? My companion wished me to. She had brothers horse-dealers, beautiful fiddlers. Suppose I learnt the fiddle? Suppose I learnt their language and went about with them and became king of the gipsies? My companion shook her head; she could not encourage this ambitious idea because she had never heard of a king of the gipsies or a queen either. 'We fool people,' she said, and offended me, for our school believed in a gipsy king, and one fellow, Hackman, used to sing a song of a gipsy king; and it was as much as to say that my schoolfellows were fools, every one of them. I accused her of telling lies. She grinned angrily. 'I don't tell 'em to friends,' she said. We had a quarrel. The truth was, I was enraged at the sweeping out of my prospects of rising to distinction among the gipsies. After breakfast at an inn, where a waiter laughed at us to our faces, and we fed scowling, shy, and hungry, we

had another quarrel. I informed her of my opinion that gipsies could not tell fortunes.

'They can, and you come to my mother and my aunt, and see if they can't tell your fortune,' said she, in a fury.

'Yes, and that 's how they fool people,' said I. I enjoyed seeing the flash of her teeth. But my daring of her to look me in the eyes and swear on her oath she believed the fortunes true ones, sent her into a fit of sullenness.

'Go along, you nasty little fellow, your shadow isn't half a yard,' she said, and I could smile at that; my shadow stretched half across the road. We had a quarrelsome day wherever we went; rarely walking close together till nightfall, when she edged up to my hand, with, 'I say, I 'll keep you warm to-night, I will.' She hugged me almost too tight, but it was warm and social, and helped to the triumph of a feeling I had that nothing made me regret running away from Rippenger's school.

An adventure befell us in the night. A farmer's wife, whom we asked for a drink of water after dark, lent us an old blanket to cover us in a dry ditch on receiving our promise not to rob the orchard. An old beggar came limping by us, and wanted to share our covering. My companion sank right under the blanket to peer at him through one of its holes. He stood enormous above me in the moonlight, like an apparition touching earth and sky.

'Cold, cold,' he whined: 'there 's ne'er a worse off but there 's a better off. Young un!' His words dispersed the fancy that he was something horrible, or else my father in disguise going to throw off his rags, and shine, and say he had found me. 'Are ye one, or are ye two?' he asked.

I replied that we were two.

'Then I 'll come and lie in the middle,' said he.

'You can't; there 's no room,' I sang out.

'Lord,' said he, 'there 's room for any reckoning o' empty stomachs in a ditch.'

'No, I prefer to be alone: good-night,' said I.

'Why!' he exclaimed, 'where ha' you been t' learn language? Halloa!'

'Please, leave me alone; it 's my intention to go to sleep,' I said, vexed at having to conciliate him; he had a big stick.

'Oho!' went the beggar. Then he recommenced:—

'Tell me you 've stole nothing in your life! You 've stole a gentleman's tongue, I knows the ring o' that. How comes you out here? Who 's your mate there down below? Now, see, I 'm going to lift my stick.'

At these menacing words the girl jumped out of the blanket, and I called to him that I would rouse the farmer.

'Why . . . because I 'm goin' to knock down a apple or two on your head?' he inquired, in a tone of reproach. 'It 's a young woman you 've got there, eh? Well, odd grows odder, like the man who turned three shillings into five. Now, you gi' me a lie under your blanket, I 'll knock down a apple a-piece. If ever you 've tasted gin, you 'll say a apple at night 's a cordial, though it don't intoxicate.'

The girl whispered in my ear, 'He 's lame as ducks.' Her meaning seized me at once; we both sprang out of the ditch and ran, dragging our blanket behind us. He pursued, but we eluded him, and dropped on a quiet sleeping-place among furzes. Next morning, when we took the blanket to the farm-house, we heard that the old wretch had traduced our characters, and got a breakfast through charging us with the robbery of the apple-tree. I proved our innocence to the farmer's wife by putting

down a shilling. The sight of it satisfied her. She combed my hair, brought me a bowl of water and a towel, and then gave us a bowl of milk and bread, and dismissed us, telling me I had a fair face and dare-devil written on it: as for the girl, she said of her that she knew gipsies at a glance, and what God Almighty made them for there was no guessing. This set me thinking all through the day, 'What can they have been made for?' I bought a red scarf for the girl, and other things she fixed her eyes on, but I lost a great deal of my feeling of fellowship with her. 'I dare say they were made for fun,' I thought, when people laughed at us now, and I laughed also.

I had a day of rollicking laughter, puzzling the girl, who could only grin two or three seconds at a time, and then stared like a dog that waits for his master to send him off again running, the corners of her mouth twitching for me to laugh or speak, exactly as a dog might wag his tail. I studied her in the light of a harmless sort of unaccountable creature; witness at any rate for the fact that I had escaped from school.

We loitered half the morning round a cricketers' booth in a field, where there was moderately good cricketing. The people thought it of first-rate quality. I told them I knew a fellow who could bowl out either eleven in an hour and a half. One of the men frightened me by saying, 'By Gearge! I 'll in with you into a gig, and off with you after that ther' faller.' He pretended to mean it, and started up. I watched him without flinching. He remarked that if I 'had not cut my lucky from school, and tossed my cap for a free life, he was——' whatever may be expressed by a slap on the thigh. We played a single-wicket side game, he giving me six runs, and crestfallen he was to find himself beaten; but, as I let him know, one who had bowled to Heriot for hours and stood

against Saddlebank's bowling, was a tough customer, never mind his age.

This man offered me his friendship. He made me sit and eat beside him at the afternoon dinner of the elevens, and sent platefuls of food to the girl, where she was allowed to squat; and said he, 'You and I 'll tie a knot, and be friends for life.'

I replied, 'With pleasure.'

We nodded over a glass of ale. In answer to his questions, I stated that I liked farms, I would come and see his farm, I would stay with him two or three days, I would give him my address if I had one, I was on my way to have a look at Riversley Grange.

'Hey!' says he, 'Riversley Grange! Well, to be sure now! I 'm a tenant of Squire Beltham's, and a right sort of landlord, too.'

'Oh!' says I, 'he 's my grandfather, but I don't care much about him.'

'Lord!' says he. 'What! be you the little boy, why, Master Harry Richmond that was carried off in the night, and the old squire shut up doors for a fortnight, and made out you was gone in a hearse! Why, I know all about you, you see. And back you are, hurrah! The squire 'll be hearty, that he will. We 've noticed a change in him ever since you left. Gout 's been at his leg, off and on, a deal shrewder. But he rides to hounds, and dines his tenants still, that he does; he 's one o' th' old style. Everything you eat and drink 's off his estate, the day he dines his tenants. No humbug 'bout old Squire Beltham.

I asked him if Sewis was alive.

'Why, old Sewis,' says he, 'you 're acquainted with old Sewis? Why, of course you are. Yes, old Sewis 's alive, Master Harry. And you bet me at single-wicket! That 'll be something to relate to 'em all. By Gearge, if I didn't

think I 'd got a nettle in my fist when I saw you pitch into my stumps. Dash it! thinks I. But th' old squire 'll be proud of you, that he will. My farm lies three miles away. You look at a crow flying due South-east five minutes from Riversley, and he 's over Throckham farm, and there I 'll drive ye to-night, and to-morrow, clean and tidy out o' my wife's soap and water, straight to Riversley. Done, eh? My name 's Eckerthy. No matter where you comes from, here you are, eh, Master Harry? And I see you last time in a donkey-basket, and here you come in breeches and defy me to single-wicket, and you bet me too!'

He laughed for jollity. An extraordinary number of emotions had possession of me: the most intelligible one being a restless vexation at myself, as the principal person concerned, for not experiencing anything like the farmer's happiness. I preferred a gipsy life to Riversley. Gipsies were on the road, and that road led to my father. I endeavoured to explain to Farmer Eckerthy that I was travelling in this direction merely to have a short look at Riversley; but it was impossible; he could not understand me. The more I tried, the more he pressed me to finish my glass of ale, which had nothing to do with it. I drank, nevertheless, and I suppose said many funny things in my anxiety that the farmer should know what I meant; he laughed enough.

While he was fielding against the opposite eleven, the tramp came into the booth, and we had a match of cunning.

'Schoolmaster 's out after you, young gentleman,' said he, advising me to hurry along the road if I sought to baffle pursuit.

I pretended alarm, and then said, 'Oh, you 'll stand by me,' and treated him to ale.

He assured me I left as many tracks behind me as if I

went spilling a box of lucifer-matches. He was always for my hastening on until I ordered fresh ale for him. The girl and he grimaced at one another in contempt. So we remained seeing the game out. By the time the game ended, the tramp had drunk numbers of glasses of ale.

'A fine-flavoured fat goose,' he counted his gains since the commencement of our acquaintance, 'bottles of ale and ginger-pop, two half-crowns, more ale, and more to follow, let 's hope. You only stick to your friends, young gentleman, won't you, sir? It 's a hard case for a poor man like me if you don't. We ain't got such chances every morning of our lives. Do you perceive, sir? I request you to inform me, do you perceive, sir? I 'm muddled a bit, sir, but a man must look after his interests.'

I perceived he was so muddled as to be unable to conceal that his interests were involved in my capture; but I was merry too. Farmer Eckerthy dealt the tramp a scattering slap on the back when he returned to the booth, elated at having beaten the enemy by a single run.

'Master Harry Richmond go to Riversley to his grandfather in your company, you scoundrel!' he cried in a rage, after listening to him. 'I mean to drive him over. It 's a comfortable ten-mile, and no more. But I say, Master Harry, what do you say to a peck o' supper?'

He communicated to me confidentially that he did not like to seem to slink away from the others, who had made up their minds to stop and sup; so we would drive home by moonlight, singing songs. And so we did. I sat beside the farmer, the girl scrambled into the hinder part of the cart, and the tramp stood moaning, 'Oh dear! oh dear! you goes away to Riversley without your best friend.'

I tossed him a shilling. We sang beginnings and ends

of songs. The farmer looked at the moon, and said, 'Lord! she stares at us!' Then he sang:—

'The moon is shining on Latworth lea,
And where 'll she see such a jovial three
As we, boys, we? And why is she pale?
It 's because she drinks water instead of ale.'

'Where 's the remainder? There 's the song!—

"Oh! handsome Miss Gammon
Has married Lord Mammon,
And jilted her suitors,
All Cupid's sharpshooters,
And gone in a carriage
And six to her marriage,
Singing hey! for I 've landed my salmon, my salmon!"

Where 's the remainder? I heard it th' only time I ever was in London town, never rested till I 'd learnt it, and now it 's clean gone. What 's come to me?'

He sang to 'Mary of Ellingmere' and another maid of some place, and a loud song of Britons.

It was startling to me to wake up to twilight in the open air and silence, for I was unaware that I had fallen asleep. The girl had roused me, and we crept down from the cart. Horse and farmer were quite motionless in a green hollow beside the roadway. Looking across fields and fir plantations, I beheld a house in the strange li ht of the hour, and my heart began beating; but I was overcome with shyness, and said to myself, 'No, no, that 's not Riversley; I 'm sure it isn't'; though the certainty of it was, in my teeth, refuting me. I ran down the fields to the park and the bright little river, and gazed. When I could say, 'Yes, it is Riversley!' I turned away, hurt even to a sense of smarting pain, without knowing the cause. I dare say it is true, as the girl declared subsequently, that I behaved like one in a fit. I dropped,

and I may have rolled my body and cried. An indefinite resentment at Riversley was the feeling I grew conscious of after very fast walking. I would not have accepted breakfast there.

About mid-day, crossing a stubble-field, the girl met a couple of her people—men. Near evening we entered one of their tents. The women set up a cry, 'Kiomi! Kiomi!' like a rising rookery. Their eyes and teeth made such a flashing as when you dabble a hand in a dark waterpool. The strange tongue they talked, with a kind of peck of the voice at a word, rapid, never high or low, and then a slide of similar tones all round,—not musical, but catching and incessant,—gave me an idea that I had fallen upon a society of birds, exceedingly curious ones. They welcomed me kindly, each of them looking me in the face a bright second or so. I had two helps from a splendid pot of broth that hung over a fire in the middle of the tent.

Kiomi was my companion's name. She had sisters Adeline and Eveleen, and brothers Osric and William, and she had a cousin a prizefighter. 'That 's what I 'll be,' said I. Fiddling for money was not a prospect that charmed me, though it was pleasant lying in Kiomi's arms to hear Osric play us off to sleep; it was like floating down one of a number of visible rivers; I could see them converging and breaking away while I floated smoothly, and a wonderful fair country nodded drowsy. From that to cock-crow at a stride. Sleep was no more than the passage through the arch of a canal. Kiomi and I were on the heath before sunrise, jumping gravel-pits, chasing sandpipers, mimicking pewits; it seemed to me I had only just heard the last of Osric's fiddle when yellow colour filled in along the sky over Riversley. The curious dark thrill of the fiddle in the tent by night seemed close up behind the sun, and my quiet fancies as I lay dropping

to sleep, followed me like unobtrusive shadows during daylight, or, to speak truthfully, till about dinner-time, when I thought of nothing but the great stew-pot. We fed on plenty; nicer food than Rippenger's, minus puddings.

After dinner I was ready for mischief. My sensations on seeing Kiomi beg of a gentleman were remarkable. I reproached her. She showed me sixpence shining in the palm of her hand. I gave her a shilling to keep her from it. She had now got one and sixpence, she said—meaning, I supposed upon reflection, that her begging had produced that sum, and therefore it was a good thing. The money remaining in my pocket amounted to five shillings and a penny. I offered it to Kiomi's mother, who refused to accept it; so did the father, and Osric also. I might think of them, they observed, on my return to my own house: they pointed at Riversley. 'No,' said I, 'I shan't go there, you may be sure.' The women grinned, and the men yawned. The business of the men appeared to be to set to work about everything as if they had a fire inside them, and then to stretch out their legs and lie on their backs, exactly as if the fire had gone out. Excepting Osric's practice on the fiddle, and the father's bringing in and leading away of horses, they did little work in my sight but brown themselves in the sun. One morning Osric's brother came to our camp with their cousin the prizefighter—a young man of lighter complexion, upon whom I gazed, remembering John Thresher's reverence for the heroical profession. Kiomi whispered some story concerning her brother having met the tramp. I did not listen; I was full of a tempest, owing to two causes: a studious admiration of the smart young prizefighter's person, and wrathful disgust at him for calling Kiomi his wife, and telling her he was prepared to marry her as soon as she played her harp like King David. The intense folly of his asking a girl to play like

David made me despise him, but he was splendidly handsome and strong, and to see him put on the gloves for a spar with big William, Kiomi's brother, and evade and ward the huge blows, would have been a treat to others besides old John of Dipwell Farm. He had the agile grace of a leopard; his waistcoat reminded me of one; he was like a piece of machinery in free action. Pleased by my enthusiasm, he gave me a lesson, promising me more.

'He 'll be champion some day,' said Kiomi, at gnaw upon an apple he had given her.

I knocked the apple on the ground, and stamped on it. She slapped my cheek. In a minute we stood in a ring. I beheld the girl actually squaring at me.

'Fight away,' I said, to conceal my shame, and imagining I could slip from her hits as easily as the prizefighter did from big William's. I was mistaken.

'Oh! you think I can't defend myself,' said Kiomi; and rushed in with one, two, quick as a cat, and cool as a statue.

'Fight, my merry one; she takes punishment,' the prizefighter sang out. 'First blood to you, Kiomi; uncork his claret, my duck; straight at the nozzle, he sees more lamps than shine in London, I warrant. Make him lively, cook him; tell him who taught you; a downer to him, and I 'll marry you to-morrow!'

I conceived a fury against her as though she had injured me by appearing the man's property—and I was getting the worst of it; her little fists shot straight and hard as bars of iron; she liked fighting; she was at least my match. To avoid the disgrace of seriously striking her, or of being beaten at an open exchange of blows, I made a feint, and caught her by the waist and threw her, not very neatly, for I fell myself in her grip. They had to pluck her from me by force.

'And you 've gone a course of tuition in wrestling, squire?' the prizefighter said to me rather savagely.

The others were cordial, and did not snarl at me for going to the ropes, as he called it. Kiomi desired to renew the conflict. I said aloud:

'I never fight girls, and I tell you I don't like their licking me.'

'Then you come down to the river and wash your face,' said she, and pulled me by the fingers, and when she had washed my face clear of blood, kissed me. I thought she tasted of the prizefighter.

Late in the afternoon Osric proposed that he and I and the prizefighter should take a walk. I stipulated for Kiomi to be of the party, which was allowed, and the gipsy-women shook my hand as though I had been departing on a long expedition, entreating me not to forget them, and never to think evil of poor gipsy-folk.

'Why, I mean to stay with you,' said I.

They grinned delightedly, and said I must be back to see them break up camp in the evening. Every two or three minutes Kiomi nudged my elbow and pointed behind, where I saw the women waving their coloured neckerchiefs. Out of sight of our tents we came in view of the tramp. Kiomi said, 'Hide!' I dived into a furze dell. The tramp approached, calling out for news of me. Now at Rippenger's school, thanks to Heriot, lying was not the fashion; still I had heard boys lie, and they can let it out of their mouths like a fish, so lively, simple, and solid, that you could fancy a master had asked them for it and they answered, 'There it is.' But boys cannot lie in one key spontaneously, a number of them to the same effect, as my friends here did. I was off, they said; all swung round to signify the direction of my steps; my plans were hinted at; particulars were not stated on the plea that there should be no tellings;

it was remarked that I ought to have fair play and 'law.' Kiomi said she hoped he would not catch me. The tramp winced with vexation, and the gipsies chaffed him. I thanked them in my heart for their loyal conduct. Creeping under cover of the dell I passed round to the road over a knoll of firs as quick as my feet could carry me, and had just cried, 'Now I 'm safe'; when a lady stepping from a carriage on the road, caught me in her arms and hugged me blind. It was my aunt Dorothy.

CHAPTER VIII

JANET ILCHESTER

I WAS a prisoner, captured by fraud, and with five shillings and a penny still remaining to me for an assurance of my power to enjoy freedom. Osric and Kiomi did not show themselves on the road, they answered none of my shouts.

'She is afraid to look me in the face,' I said, keeping my anger on Kiomi.

'Harry, Harry,' said my aunt, 'they must have seen me here; do you grieve, and you have me, dear?'

Her eager brown eyes devoured me while I stood panting to be happy, if only I might fling my money at Kiomi's feet, and tell her, 'There, take all I have; I hate you!' One minute I was curiously perusing the soft shade of a moustache on my aunt's upper lip; the next, we jumped into the carriage, and she was my dear aunt Dorothy again, and the world began rolling another way.

The gipsies had made an appointment to deliver me over to my aunt; Farmer Eckerthy had spoken of me to my grandfather; the tramp had fetched Mr. Rippenger

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on the scene. Rippenger paid the tramp, I dare say; my grandfather paid Rippenger's bill and for Saddlebank's goose; my aunt paid the gipsies, and I think it doubtful that they handed the tramp a share, so he came to the end of his list of benefits from not asking questions.

I returned to Riversley more of a man than most boys of my age, and more of a child. A small child would not have sulked as I did at Kiomi's behaviour; but I met my grandfather's ridiculous politeness with a man's indifference.

'So you 're back, sir, are you!'

'I am, sir.'

'Ran like a hare, 'stead of a fox, eh?'

'I didn't run like either, sir.'

'Do you ride?'

'Yes, sir; a horse.'

That was his greeting and how I took it. I had not run away from him, so I had a quiet conscience.

He said, shortly after, 'Look here; your name is Harry Richmond in my house—do you understand? My servants have orders to call you Master Harry Richmond, according to your christening. You were born here, sir, you will please to recollect. I 'll have no vagabond names here'—he puffed himself hot, muttering, 'Nor vagabond airs neither.'

I knew very well what it meant. A sore spirit on my father's behalf kept me alive to any insult of him; and feeling that we were immeasurably superior to the Beltham blood, I merely said, apart to old Sewis, shrugging my shoulders, 'The squire expects me to recollect where I was born. I 'm not likely to forget his nonsense.'

Sewis, in reply, counselled me to direct a great deal of my attention to the stables, and drink claret with the squire in the evening, things so little difficult to do that I moralized reflectively, 'Here 's a way of gaining a

relative's affection!' The squire's punctilious regard for payments impressed me, it is true. He had saved me from the disgrace of owing money to my detested schoolmaster; and, besides, I was under his roof, eating of his bread. My late adventurous life taught me that I incurred an obligation by it. Kiomi was the sole victim of my anger that really seemed to lie down to be trampled on, as she deserved for her unpardonable treachery.

By degrees my grandfather got used to me, and commenced saying in approval of certain of my performances, 'There 's Beltham in that—Beltham in that!' Once out hunting, I took a nasty hedge and ditch in front of him; he bawled proudly, 'Beltham all over!' and praised me. At night, drinking claret, he said on a sudden, 'And, egad, Harry, you must jump your *head* across hedges and ditches, my little fellow. It won't do, in these confounded days, to have you clever all at the wrong end. In my time, good in the saddle was good for everything; but now you must get your brains where you can—pick here, pick there—and sell 'em like a huckster; some do. Nature 's gone—it 's damned artifice rules, I tell ye; and a squire of our country must be three parts lawyer to keep his own. You must learn; by God, sir, you must cogitate; you must stew at books and maps, or you 'll have some infernal upstart taking the lead of you, and leaving you nothing but the whiff of his tail.' He concluded, 'I 'm glad to see you toss down your claret, my boy.'

Thus I grew in his favour, till I heard from him that I was to be the heir of Riversley and his estates, but on one condition, which he did not then mention. If I might have spoken to him of my father, I should have loved him. As it was, I liked old Sewis better, for he would talk to me of the night when my father carried me away, and though he never uttered the flattering words I longed

to hear, he repeated the story often, and made the red hall glow with beams of my father's image. My walks and rides were divided between the road he must have followed toward London, bearing me in his arms, and the vacant place of Kiomi's camp. Kiomi stood for freedom, pointing into the darkness I wished to penetrate that I might find him. If I spoke of him to my aunt she trembled. She said, 'Yes, Harry, tell me all you are thinking about, whatever you want to know'; but her excessive trembling checked me, and I kept my feelings to myself—a boy with a puzzle in his head and hunger in his heart. At times I rode out to the utmost limit of the hour giving me the proper number of minutes to race back and dress for dinner at the squire's table, and a great wrestling I had with myself to turn my little horse's head from hills and valleys lying East; they seemed to have the secret of my father. Blank enough they looked if ever I despaired of their knowing more than I. My Winter and Summer were the moods of my mind constantly shifting. I would have a week of the belief that he was near Riversley, calling for me; a week of the fear that he was dead; long dreams of him, as travelling through foreign countries, patting the foreheads of boys and girls on his way; or driving radiantly, and people bowing. Radiantly, I say: had there been touches of colour in these visions, I should have been lured off in pursuit of him. The dreams passed colourlessly; I put colouring touches to the figures seen in them afterward, when I was cooler, and could say, 'What is the use of fancying things?' yet knew that fancying things was a consolation. By such means I came to paint the mystery surrounding my father in tender colours. I built up a fretted cathedral from what I imagined of him, and could pass entirely away out of the world by entering the doors.

Want of boys' society as well as hard head-work produced this mischief. My lessons were intermittent. Resident tutors arrived to instruct me, one after another. They were clergymen, and they soon proposed to marry my aunt Dorothy, or they rebuked the squire for swearing. The devil was in the parsons, he said: in his time they were modest creatures and stuck to the bottle and heaven. My aunt was of the opinion of our neighbours, who sent their boys to school and thought I should be sent likewise.

'No, no,' said the squire; 'my life 's short when the gout 's marching up to my middle, and I 'll see as much of my heir as I can. Why, the lad 's my daughter's son! He shall grow up among his tenantry. We 'll beat the country and start a man at last to drive his yard of learning into him without rolling sheep's eyes right and left.'

Unfortunately the squire's description of man was not started. My aunt was handsome, an heiress (that is, she had money of her own coming from her mother's side of the family), and the tenderest woman alive, with a voice sweeter than flutes. There was a saying in the county that to marry a Beltham you must po'chay her.

A great-aunt of mine, the squire's sister, had been carried off. She died childless. A favourite young cousin of his likewise had run away with a poor baronet, Sir Roderick Ilchester, whose son Charles was now and then our playmate, and was a scapegrace. But for me he would have been selected by the squire for his heir, he said; and he often 'confounded' me to my face on that account as he shook my hand, breaking out: 'I 'd as lief fetch you a cuff o' the head, Harry Richmond, upon my honour!' and cursing at his luck for having to study for his living, and be what he called a sloppy curate now that I had come to Riversley for good.

He informed me that I should have to marry his sister Janet; for that they could not allow the money to go out of the family. Janet Ilchester was a quaint girl, a favourite of my aunt Dorothy, and the squire's especial pet; red-cheeked, with a good upright figure in walking and riding, and willing to be friendly, but we always quarrelled: she detested hearing of Kiomi.

'Don't talk of creatures you met when you were a beggar, Harry Richmond,' she said.

'I never was a beggar,' I replied.

'Then she was a beggar,' said Janet; and I could not deny it; though the only difference I saw between Janet and Kiomi was, that Janet continually begged favours and gifts of people she knew, and Kiomi of people who were strangers.

My allowance of pocket-money from the squire was fifty pounds a year. I might have spent it all in satisfying Janet's wishes for riding-whips, knives, pencil-cases, cairngorm buttons, and dogs. A large part of the money went that way. She was always getting notice of fine dogs for sale. I bought a mastiff for her, a brown retriever, and a little terrier. She was permitted to keep the terrier at home, but I had to take care of the mastiff and retriever. When Janet came to look at them she called them by their names; of course they followed me in preference to her; she cried with jealousy. We had a downright quarrel. Lady Ilchester invited me to spend a day at her house, Charley being home for his Midsummer holidays. Charley, Janet, and I fished the river for trout, and Janet, to flatter me (of which I was quite aware), while I dressed her rod as if she was likely to catch something, talked of Heriot, and then said: 'Oh! dear, we are good friends, aren't we? Charley says we shall marry one another some day, but mama 's such a proud woman she won't much like your having

such a father as you 've got unless he 's dead by that time and I needn't go up to him to be kissed.'

I stared at the girl in wonderment, but not too angrily, for I guessed that she was merely repeating her brother's candid speculations upon the future. I said: 'Now mind what I tell you, Janet: I forgive you this once, for you are an ignorant little girl and know no better. Speak respectfully of my father or you never see me again.'

Here Charley sang out: 'Hulloa! you don't mean to say you 're talking of your father.'

Janet whimpered that I had called her an ignorant little girl. If she had been silent I should have pardoned her. The meanness of the girl in turning on me when the glaring offence was hers, struck me as contemptible beyond words. Charley and I met half way. He advised me not to talk to his sister of my father. They all knew, he said, that it was no fault of mine, and for his part, had he a rascal for a father, he should pension him and cut him; to tell the truth, no objection against me existed in his family except on the score of the sort of father I owned to, and I had better make up my mind to shake him off before I grew a man; he spoke as a friend. I might frown at him and clench my fists, but he did speak as a friend.

Janet all the while was nibbling a biscuit, glancing over it at me with mouse-eyes. Her short frock and her greediness, contrasting with the talk of my marrying her, filled me with renewed scorn, though my heart was sick at the mention of my father. I asked her what she knew of him. She nibbled her biscuit, mumbling, 'He went to Riversley, pretending he was a singing-master. I know that 's true, and more.'

'Oh, and a drawing-master, and a professor of leger-demain,' added her brother. 'Expunge him, old fellow; he 's no good.'

'No, I 'm sure he 's no good,' said Janet.

I took her hand, and told her, 'You don't know how you hurt me; but you 're a child: you don't know anything about the world. I love my father, remember that, and what you want me to do is mean and disgraceful; but you don't know better. I would forfeit everything in the world for him. And when you 're of age to marry, marry anybody you like—you won't marry me. And good-bye, Janet. Think of learning your lessons, and not of marrying. I can't help laughing.' So I said, but without the laughter. Her brother tried hard to get me to notice him.

Janet betook herself to the squire. Her prattle of our marriage in days to come was excuseable. It was the squire's notion. He used to remark generally that he liked to see things look safe and fast, and he had, as my aunt confided to me, arranged with Lady Ilchester, in the girl's hearing, that we should make a match. My grandfather pledged his word to Janet that he would restore us to an amicable footing. He thought it a light task. Invitations were sent out to a large party at Riversley, and Janet came with all my gifts on her dress or in her pockets. The squire led the company to the gates of his stables; the gates opened, and a beautiful pony, with a side-saddle on, was trotted forth, amid cries of admiration. Then the squire put the bridle-reins in my hands, bidding me present it myself. I asked the name of the person. He pointed at Janet. I presented the pony to Janet, and said, 'It 's from the squire.'

She forgot, in her delight, our being at variance.

'No, no, you stupid Harry, I 'm to thank you. He 's a darling pony. I want to kiss you.'

I retired promptly, but the squire had heard her.

'Back, sir!' he shouted, swearing by this and that. 'You slink from a kiss, and you 're Beltham blood?

Back to her, lad. Take it. Up with her in your arms, or down on your knees. Take it manfully, somehow. See there, she 's got it ready for you.'

'I 've got a letter ready for you, Harry, to say—oh! so sorry for offending you,' Janet whispered, when I reached the pony's head; 'and if you 'd rather not be kissed before people, then by-and-by, but do shake hands.'

'Pull the pony's mane,' said I; 'that will do as well. Observe—I pull, and now you pull.'

Janet mechanically followed my actions. She grimaced, and whimpered, 'I could pull the pony's mane right out.'

'Don't treat animals like your dolls,' said I.

She ran to the squire, and refused the pony. The squire's face changed from merry to black.

'Young man,' he addressed me, 'don't show that worse half of yours in genteel society, or, by the Lord! you won't carry Beltham buttons for long. This young lady, mind you, is a lady by birth both sides.'

'She thinks she is marriageable,' said I; and walked away, leaving loud laughter behind me.

But laughter did not console me for the public aspersion of him I loved. I walked off the grounds, and thought to myself it was quite time I should be moving. Wherever I stayed for any length of time I was certain to hear abuse of my father. Why not wander over the country with Kiomi, go to sea, mount the Andes, enlist in a Prussian regiment, and hear the soldiers tell tales of Frederick the Great? I walked over Kiomi's heath till dark, when one of our grooms on horseback overtook me, saying that the squire begged me to jump on the horse and ride home as quick as possible. Two other lads and the coachman were out scouring the country to find me, and the squire was anxious, it appeared. I rode home like a wounded man made to feel proud by victory, but with no one to stop the bleeding of his wounds: and

the more my pride rose, the more I suffered pain. There at home sat my grandfather, dejected, telling me that the loss of me a second time would kill him, begging me to overlook his roughness, calling me his little Harry and his heir, his brave-spirited boy; yet I was too sure that a word of my father to him would have brought him very near another ejaculation concerning Beltham buttons.

'You 're a fiery young fellow, I suspect,' he said, when he had recovered his natural temper. 'I like you for it; pluck 's Beltham. Have a will of your own. Sweat out the bad blood. Here, drink my health, Harry. You 're three parts Beltham, at least, and it 'll go hard if you 're not all Beltham before I die. Old blood always wins that race, I swear. We 're the oldest in the county. Damn the mixing. My father never let any of his daughters marry, if he could help it, nor 'll I, bar rascals. Here 's to you, young Squire Beltham. Harry Lepel Beltham—does that suit ye? Anon, anon, as they say in the play. Take my name, and drop the Richmond —no, drop the subject: we 'll talk of it by-and-by.'

So he wrestled to express his hatred of my father without offending me; and I studied him coldly, thinking that the sight of my father in beggar's clothes, raising a hand for me to follow his steps, would draw me forth, though Riversley should beseech me to remain clad in wealth.

CHAPTER IX

AN EVENING WITH CAPTAIN BULSTED

A DREAM that my father lay like a wax figure in a bed gave me thoughts of dying. I was ill and did not know it, and imagined that my despair at the foot of the stairs

of ever reaching my room to lie down peacefully was the sign of death. My aunt Dorothy nursed me for a week: none but she and my dogs entered the room. I had only two faint wishes left in me: one that the squire should be kept out of my sight, the other that she would speak to me of my mother's love for my father. She happened to say, musing, 'Harry, you have your mother's heart.'

I said, 'No, my father's.'

From that we opened a conversation, the sweetest I had ever had away from him, though she spoke shyly and told me very little. It was enough for me in the narrow world of my dogs' faces, and the red-leaved creeper at the window, the fir-trees on the distant heath, and her hand clasping mine. My father had many faults, she said, but he had been cruelly used, or deceived, and he bore a grievous burden; and then she said, 'Yes,' and 'Yes,' and 'Yes,' in the voice one supposes of a ghost retiring, to my questions of his merits. I was refreshed and satisfied, like the parched earth with dews when it gets no rain, and I was soon well.

When I walked among the household again, I found that my week of seclusion had endowed me with a singular gift; I found that I could see through everybody. Looking at the squire, I thought to myself, 'My father has faults, but he has been cruelly used,' and immediately I forgave the old man; his antipathy to my father seemed a craze, and to account for it I lay in wait for his numerous illogical acts and words, and smiled visibly in contemplation of his rough unreasonable nature, and of my magnanimity. He caught the smile, and interpreted it.

'Grinning at me, Harry; have I made a slip in my grammar, eh?'

Who could feel any further sensitiveness at his fits of irritation, reading him as I did? I saw through my

aunt: she was always in dread of a renewal of our conversation. I could see her ideas flutter like birds to escape me. And I penetrated the others who came in my way just as unerringly. Farmer Eckerthy would acknowledge, astonished, his mind was running on cricket when I taxed him with it.

'Crops was the cart-load of my thoughts, Master Harry, but there was a bit o' cricket in it, too, ne'er a doubt.'

My aunt's maid, Davis, was shocked by my discernment of the fact that she was in love, and it was useless for her to pretend the contrary, for I had seen her granting tender liberties to Lady Ilchester's footman.

Old Sewis said gravely, 'You 've been to the witches, Master Harry'; and others were sure 'I had got it from the gipsies off the common.'

The maids were partly incredulous, but I perceived that they disbelieved as readily as they believed. With my latest tutor, the Rev. Simon Hart, I was not sufficiently familiar to offer him proofs of my extraordinary power; so I begged favours of him, and laid hot-house flowers on his table in the name of my aunt, and had the gratification of seeing him blush. His approval of my Latin exercise was verbal, and weak praise in comparison; besides I cared nothing for praises not referring to my grand natural accomplishment. 'And my father now is thinking of me!' That was easy to imagine, but the certainty of it confirmed me in my conceit.

'How can you tell?—how is it possible for you to know people's thoughts?' said Janet Ilchester, whose head was as open to me as a hat. She pretended to be rather more frightened of me than she was.

'And now you think you are flattering me!' I said.

She looked nervous.

'And now you 're asking yourself what you can do better than I can!'

She said, 'Go on.'

I stopped.

She charged me with being pulled up short.

I denied it.

'Guess, guess!' said she. 'You can't.'

My reply petrified her. 'You were thinking that you are a lady by birth on both sides.'

At first she refused to admit it. 'No, it wasn't that, Harry, it wasn't really. I was thinking how clever you are.'

'Yes, after, not before.'

'No, Harry, but you are clever. I wish I was half as clever. Fancy reading people's ideas! I can read my pony's, but that 's different; I know by his ears. And as for my being a lady, of course I am, and so are you—I mean, a gentleman. I was thinking—now this is really what I was thinking—I wished your father lived near, that we might all be friends. I can't bear the squire when he talks. . . . And you quite as good as me, and better. Don't shake me off, Harry.'

I shook her in the gentlest manner, not suspecting that she had read my feelings fully as well as I her thoughts. Janet and I fell to talking of my father incessantly, and were constantly together. The squire caught one of my smiles rising, when he applauded himself lustily for the original idea of matching us; but the idea was no longer distasteful to me. It appeared to me that if I must some day be married, a wife who would enjoy my narratives, and travel over the four quarters of the globe, as Janet promised to do, in search of him I loved, would be the preferable person. I swore her to secresy; she was not to tell her brother Charley the subject we conversed on.

'Oh dear, no!' said she, and told him straightway.

Charley, home for his winter holidays, blurted out at the squire's table: 'So, Harry Richmond, you 're the cleverest fellow in the world, are you? There 's Janet telling everybody your father 's the cleverest next to you, and she 's never seen him!'

'How? hulloa, what 's that?' sang out the squire.

'Charley was speaking of my father, sir,' I said, preparing for thunder.

We all rose. The squire looked as though an apoplectic seizure were coming on.

'Don't sit at my table again,' he said, after a terrible struggle to be articulate.

His hand was stretched at me. I swung round to depart. 'No, no, not you; that fellow,' he called, getting his arm level toward Charley.

I tried to intercede—the last who should have done it.

'You like to hear him, eh?' said the squire.

I was ready to say that I did, but my aunt, whose courage was up when occasion summoned it, hushed the scene by passing the decanter to the squire, and speaking to him in a low voice.

'Biter 's bit. I 've dished myself, that 's clear,' said Charley; and he spoke the truth, and such was his frankness that I forgave him.

He and Janet were staying at Riversley. They left next morning, for the squire would not speak to him, nor I to Janet.

'I 'll tell you what; there 's no doubt about one thing,' said Charley; 'Janet 's right—some of those girls are tremendously deep: you 're about the cleverest fellow I 've ever met in my life. I thought of working into the squire in a sort of collateral manner, you know. A cornetcy in the Dragoon Guards in a year or two. I thought the squire might do that for me without much damaging you;—perhaps a couple of hundred a year,

just to reconcile me to a nose out of joint. For, upon my honour, the squire spoke of making me his heir—or words to that effect neatly conjugated—before you came back; and rather than be a curate like that Reverend Hart of yours, who hands raisins and almonds, and orange-flower biscuits to your aunt—the way of all the Reverends who drop down on Riversley—I 'd betray my bosom friend. I 'm regularly "hoist on my own petard," as they say in the newspapers. I 'm a curate and no mistake. You did it with a turn of the wrist, without striking out: and I like neat boxing. I bear no malice when I 'm floored neatly.'

Five minutes after he had spoken it would have been impossible for me to tell him that my simplicity and not my cleverness had caused his overthrow. From this I learnt that simplicity is the keenest weapon and a beautiful refinement of cleverness; and I affected it extremely. I pushed it so far that I could make the squire dance in his seat with suppressed fury and jealousy at my way of talking of Venice, and other Continental cities, which he knew I must have visited in my father's society; and though he raged at me and pshawed the Continent to the deuce, he was ready, out of sheer rivalry, to grant anything I pleased to covet. At every stage of my growth one or another of my passions was alert to twist me awry, and now I was getting a false self about me and becoming liker to the creature people supposed me to be, despising them for blockheads in my heart, as boys may who preserve a last trace of the ingenuousness denied to seasoned men.

Happily my aunt wrote to Mr. Rippenger for the address of little Gus Temple's father, to invite my schoolfellow to stay a month at Riversley. Temple came, everybody liked him; as for me my delight was unbounded, and in spite of a feeling of superiority due to

my penetrative capacity, and the suspicion it originated, that Temple might be acting the plain well-bred schoolboy he was, I soon preferred his pattern to my own. He confessed he had found me changed at first. His father, it appeared, was working him as hard at Latin as Mr. Hart worked me, and he sat down beside me under my tutor and stumbled at Tacitus after his fluent Cicero. I offered excuses for him to Mr. Hart, saying he would soon prove himself the better scholar. 'There 's my old Richie!' said Temple, fondling me on the shoulder, and my nonsensical airs fell away from me at once.

We roamed the neighbourhood talking old school-days over, visiting houses, hunting and dancing, declaring every day we would write for Heriot to join us, instead of which we wrote a valentine to Julia Rippenger, and despatched a companion one composed in a very different spirit to her father. Lady Ilchester did us the favour to draw a sea-monster, an Andromeda, and a Perseus in the shape of a flying British hussar, for Julia's valentine. It seemed to us so successful that we scattered half-a-dozen over the neighbourhood, and rode round it on the morning of St. Valentine's Day to see the effect of them, meeting the postman on the road. He gave me two for myself. One was transparently from Janet, a provoking counterstroke of mine to her; but when I opened the other my heart began beating. The standard of Great Britain was painted in colours at the top; down each side, encricled in laurels, were kings and queens of England with their sceptres, and in the middle I read the initials, A. F-G. R. R., embedded in blue forget-me-nots. I could not doubt it was from my father. Riding out in the open air as I received it, I could fancy in my hot joy that it had dropped out of heaven.

'He 's alive; I shall have him with me; I shall have him with me soon!' I cried to Temple. 'Oh! why can't

I answer him? where is he? what address? Let 's ride to London. Don't you understand, Temple? This letter 's from my father. He knows I 'm here. I 'll find him, never mind what happens.'

'Yes, but,' said Temple, 'if he knows where you are, and you don't know where he is, there 's no good in your going off adventuring. If a fellow wants to be hit, the best thing he can do is to stop still.'

Struck by the perspicacity of his views, I turned homeward. Temple had been previously warned by me to avoid speaking of my father at Riversley; but I was now in such a boiling state of happiness, believing that my father would certainly appear as he had done at Dipwell farm, brilliant and cheerful, to bear me away to new scenes and his own dear society, that I tossed the valentine to my aunt across the breakfast-table, laughing and telling her to guess the name of the sender. My aunt flushed.

'Miss Bannerbridge?' she said.

A stranger was present. The squire introduced us.

'My grandson, Harry Richmond, Captain William Bulsted, frigate Polyphemus; Captain Bulsted, Master Augustus Temple.'

For the sake of conversation, Temple asked him if his ship was fully manned.

'All but a mate,' said the captain.

I knew him by reputation as the brother of Squire Gregory Bulsted of Bulsted, notorious for his attachment to my aunt, and laughing-stock of the county.

'So you 've got a valentine,' the captain addressed me. 'I went on shore at Rio last year on this very day of the month, just as lively as you youngsters for one. Salt-water keeps a man's youth in pickle. No valentine for me! Paid off my ship yesterday at Spithead, and here I am again on Valentine's Day.'

Temple and I stared hard at a big man with a bronzed skin and a rubicund laugh who expected to receive valentines.

My aunt thrust the letter back to me secretly. 'It must be from a lady,' said she.

'Why, who 'd have a valentine from any but a lady?' exclaimed the captain.

The squire winked at me to watch his guest. Captain Bulsted fed heartily; he was thoroughly a sailor-gentleman, between the old school and the new, and, as I perceived, as far gone in love with my aunt as his brother was. Presently Sewis entered carrying a foaming tankard of old ale, and he and the captain exchanged a word or two upon Jamaica.

'Now, when you 've finished that washy tea of yours, take a draught of our October, brewed here long before you were a lieutenant, captain,' said the squire.

'Thank you, sir,' the captain replied; 'I know that ale; a moment, and I will gladly. I wish to preserve my faculties; I don't wish to have it supposed that I speak under fermenting influences. Sewis, hold by, if you please.'

My aunt made an effort to retire.

'No, no, fair play; stay,' said the squire, trying to frown, but twinkling; my aunt tried to smile, and sat as if on springs.

'Miss Beltham,' the captain bowed to her, and to each one as he spoke, 'Squire Beltham, Mr. Harry Richmond, Mr. Temple; my ship was paid off yesterday, and till a captain's ship is paid off, he 's not his own master, as you are aware. If you think my behaviour calls for comment, reflect, I beseech you, on the nature of a sailor's life. A three-years' cruise in a cabin is pretty much equivalent to the same amount of time spent in a coffin,

I can assure you; with the difference that you 're hard at work thinking all the time like the—hum.'

'Ay, he thinks hard enough,' the squire struck in.

'Pardon me, sir; like the—hum—plumb-line on a lee-shore, I meant to observe. This is now the third—the fourth occasion on which I have practised the observance of paying my first visit to Riversley to know my fate, that I might not have it on my conscience that I had missed a day, a minute, as soon as I was a free man on English terra firma. My brother Greg and I were brought up in close association with Riversley. One of the Beauties of Riversley we lost! One was left, and we both tried our luck with her; honourably, in turn, each of us, nothing underhand; above-board, on the quarter-deck, before all the company. I 'll say it of my brother, I can say it of myself. Greg's chances, I need not remark, are superior to mine; he is always in port. If he wins, then I tell him—"God bless you, my boy; you 've won the finest woman, the handsomest, and the best, in or out of Christendom!" But my chance is my property, though it may be value only one farthing coin of the realm, and there is always pity for poor sinners in the female bosom. Miss Beltham, I trespass on your kind attention. If I am to remain a bachelor and you a maiden lady, why, the will of heaven be done! If you marry another, never mind who the man, there 's my stock to the fruit of the union, never mind what the sex. But, if you will have one so unworthy of you as me, my hand and heart are at your feet, ma'am, as I have lost no time in coming to tell you.' So Captain Bulsted concluded. Our eyes were directed on my aunt. The squire bade her to speak out, for she had his sanction to act according to her judgement and liking.

She said, with a gracefulness that gave me a little aching of pity for the poor captain: 'I am deeply honoured

by you, Captain Bulsted, but it is not my intention to marry.'

The captain stood up, and bowing humbly, replied: 'I am ever your servant, ma'am.'

My aunt quitted the room.

'Now for the tankard, Sewis,' said the captain.

Gradually the bottom of the great tankard turned up to the ceiling. He drank to the last drop in it.

The squire asked him whether he found consolation in that.

The captain sighed prodigiously and said: 'It 's a commencement, sir.'

'Egad, it 's a commencement 'd be something like a final end to any dozen of our fellows round about here. I 'll tell you what: if stout stomachs gained the day in love-affairs, I suspect you 'd run a good race against the male half of our county, William. And a damned good test of a man's metal, I say it is! What are you going to do to-day?'

'I am going to get drunk, sir.'

'Well, you might do worse. Then, stop here, William, and give my old Port the preference. No tongue in the morning, I promise you, and pleasant dreams at night.' The captain thanked him cordially, but declined, saying that he would rather make a beast of himself in another place.

The squire vainly pressed his hospitality by assuring him of perfect secresy on our part, as regarded my aunt, and offering him Sewis and one of the footmen to lift him to bed. 'You are very good, squire,' said the captain; 'nothing but a sense of duty restrains me. I am bound to convey the information to my brother that the coast is clear for him.'

'Well, then, fall light, and for'ard,' said the squire, shaking him by the hand. Forty years ago a gentleman,

a baronet, had fallen on the back of his head and never recovered.

'Ay, ay, *launch* stern foremost, if you like!' said the captain, nodding; 'no, no, I don't go into port pulled by the tail, my word for it, squire; and good day to you, sir.'

'No ill will about this bothering love-business of yours, William?'

'On my soul, sir, I cherish none.'

Temple and I followed him out of the house, fascinated by his manners and oddness. He invited us to jump into the chariot beside him. We were witnesses of the meeting between him and his brother, a little sniffling man, as like the captain as a withered nut is like a milky one.

'Same luck, William?' said Squire Gregory.

'Not a point of change in the wind, Greg,' said the captain.

They wrenched hands thereupon, like two carpet-shakers, with a report, and much in a similar attitude.

'These young gentlemen will testify to you solemnly, Greg, that I took no unfair advantage,' said the captain; 'no whispering in passages, no appointments in gardens, no letters. I spoke out. Bravely, man! And now, Greg, referring to the state of your cellar, our young friends here mean to float with us to-night. It is now half-past eleven A.M. Your dinner-hour the same as usual, of course? Therefore at four P.M. the hour of execution. And come, Greg, you and I will visit the cellar. A dozen and half of light and half-a-dozen of the old family—that will be about the number of bottles to give me my quietus, and you yours—all of us! And you, young gentlemen, take your guns or your rods, and back and be dressed by the four bell, or you 'll not find the same man in Billy Bulsted.'

Temple was enraptured with him. He declared he

had been thinking seriously for a long time of entering the Navy, and his admiration of the captain must have given him an intuition of his character, for he persuaded me to send to Riversley for our evening-dress clothes, appearing in which at the dinner-table, we received the captain's compliments, as being gentlemen who knew how to attire ourselves to suit an occasion. The occasion, Squire Gregory said, happened to him too often for him to distinguish it by the cut of his coat.

'I observe, nevertheless, Greg, that you have a black tie round your neck instead of a red one,' said the captain.

'Then it came there by accident,' said Squire Gregory.

'Accident! There 's no such thing as accident. If I wander out of the house with a half dozen or so in me, and topple into the brook, am I accidentally drowned? If a squall upsets my ship, is she an accidental residue of spars and timber and old iron? If a woman refuses me, is that an accident? There 's a cause for every disaster: too much cargo, want of foresight, want of pluck. Pooh! when I 'm hauled prisoner into a foreign port in time of war, you may talk of accidents. Mr. Harry Richmond, Mr. Temple, I have the accidental happiness of drinking to your healths in a tumbler of hock wine. Nominative, hic, hæc, hoc.'

Squire Gregory carried on the declension, not without pride. The Vocative confused him.

'Claret will do for the Vocative,' said the captain, gravely; 'the more so as there is plenty of it at your table, Greg. Ablative hoc, hac, hoc, which sounds as if the gentleman had become incapable of speech beyond the name of his wine. So we will abandon the declension of the article for a dash of champagne, which there 's no declining, I hope. Wonderful men, those Romans! They fought their ships well, too. A question to you, Greg. Those heathen Pagan dogs had a religion that

encouraged them to swear. Now, my experience of life pronounces it to be a human necessity to rap out an oath here and there. What do you say?'

Squire Gregory said: 'Drinking, and no thinking, at dinner, William.' The captain pledged him.

'I 'll take the opportunity, as we 're not on board ship, of drinking to you, sir, now,' Temple addressed the captain, whose face was resplendent; and he bowed, and drank, and said,—

'As we are not on board ship? I like you!'

Temple thanked him for the compliment.

'No compliment, my lad. You see me in my weakness, and you have the discernment to know me for something better than I seem. You promise to respect me on my own quarter-deck. You are of the right stuff. Do I speak correctly, Mr. Harry?'

'Temple is my dear friend,' I replied.

'And he would not be so if not of the right stuff! Good! That 's a way of putting much in little. By Jove! a royal style.'

'And Harry 's a royal fellow!' said Temple.

We all drank to one another. The captain's eyes scrutinized me speculatingly.

'This boy might have been yours or mine, Greg,' I heard him say in a faltering rough tone.

They forgot the presence of Temple and me, but spoke as if they thought they were whispering. The captain assured his brother that Squire Beltham had given him as much fair play as one who holds a balance. Squire Gregory doubted it, and sipped and kept his nose at his wineglass, crabbedly repeating his doubts of it. The captain then remarked, that doubting it, his conscience permitted him to use stratagems, though he, the captain, not doubting it, had no such permission.

'I count I run away with her every night of my life,'

said Squire Gregory. 'Nothing comes of it but empty bottles.'

'Court her, serenade her,' said the captain; 'blockade the port, lay siege to the citadel. I 'd give a year of service for your chances, Greg. Half a word from her, and you have your horses ready.'

'She 's past po'chaises,' Squire Gregory sighed.

'She 's to be won by a bold stroke, brother Greg.'

'Oh, Lord, no! She 's past po'chaises.'

'Humph! it 's come to be half-bottle, half-beauty, with your worship, Greg, I suspect.'

'No. I tell you, William, she 's got her mind on that fellow. You can't po'chay her.'

'After he jilted her for her sister? Wrong, Greg, wrong. You are muddled. She has a fright about matrimony—a common thing at her age, I am told. Where 's the man?'

'In the Bench, of course. Where 'd you have him?'

'I, sir? If I knew my worst enemy to be there, I 'd send him six dozen of the best in my cellar.'

Temple shot a walnut at me. I pretended to be meditating carelessly, and I had the heat and roar of a conflagration round my head.

Presently the captain said, 'Are you sure the man 's in the Bench?'

'Cock,' Squire Gregory replied.

'He had money from his wife.'

'And he had the wheels to make it go.' Here they whispered in earnest.

'Oh, the Billings were as rich as the Belthams,' said the captain, aloud.

'Pretty nigh, William.'

'That 's our curse, Greg. Money settled on their male issue, and money in hand; by the Lord! we 've always had the look of a pair of highwaymen lurking for purses,

when it was the woman, the woman, penniless, naked—I mean destitute; nothing but the woman we wanted. And there was one apiece for us. Greg, old boy, when will the old county show such another couple of Beauties! Greg, sir, you 're not half a man, or you 'd have carried her, with your opportunities. The fellow 's in the Bench, you say? How are you cock-sure of that, Mr. Greg?'

'Company,' was the answer; and the captain turned to Temple and me, apologizing profusely for talking over family matters with his brother after a separation of three years. I had guessed but hastily at the subject of their conversation until they mentioned the Billings, the family of my maternal grandmother. The name was like a tongue of fire shooting up in a cloud of smoke: I saw at once that the man in the Bench must be my father, though what the Bench was exactly, and where it was, I had no idea, and as I was left to imagination I became, as usual, childish in my notions, and brooded upon thoughts of the Man in the Iron Mask; things I dared not breathe to Temple, of whose manly sense I stood in awe when under these distracting influences.

'Remember our feast in the combe?' I sang across the table to him.

'Never forget it!' said he; and we repeated the tale of the goose at Rippenger's school to our entertainers, making them laugh.

'And next morning Richie ran off with a gipsy girl,' said Temple; and I composed a narrative of my wanderings with Kiomi, much more amusing than the real one. The captain vowed he would like to have us both on board his ship, but that times were too bad for him to offer us a prospect of promotion. 'Spin round the decanters,' said he; 'now 's the hour for them to go like a humming-top, and each man lend a hand: whip hard,

my lads. It 's once in three years, hurrah! and the cause is a cruel woman. Toast her; but no name. Here 's to the nameless Fair! For it 's not my intention to marry, says she, and, ma'am, I 'm a man of honour: or I 'd catch you tight, my nut-brown maid, and clap you into a cage, fal-lal, like a squirrel; to trot the wheel of mat—trimony. Shame to the first man down!'

'That won't be I,' said Temple.

'Be me, sir, me,' the captain corrected his grammar.

'Pardon me, Captain Bulsted; the verb "To be" governs the nominative case in our climate,' said Temple.

'Then I 'm nominative hic . . . I say, sir, I 'm in the tropics, Mr. Tem . . . Mr. Tempus. Point of honour, not forget a man's name. Rippenger, your schoolmaster? Mr. Rippenger, you 've knocked some knowledge into this young gentleman.' Temple and I took counsel together hastily; we cried in a breath: 'Here 's to Julia Rippenger, the prettiest, nicest girl living!' and we drank to her.

'Julia!' the captain echoed us. 'I join your toast, gentlemen. Mr. Richmond, Mr. Tempus—Julia! By all that 's holy, she floats a sinking ship! Julia consoles me for the fairest, cruellest woman alive. A rough sailor, Julia! at your feet.'

The captain fell commendably forward. Squire Gregory had already dropped. Temple and I tried to meet, but did not accomplish it till next morning at breakfast. A couple of footmen carried us each upstairs in turn, as if they were removing furniture.

Out of this strange evening came my discovery of my father, and the captain's winning of a wife.

CHAPTER X

AN EXPEDITION

I WONDERED audibly where the Bench was when Temple and I sat together alone at Squire Gregory's breakfast-table next morning, very thirsty for tea. He said it was a place in London, but did not add the sort of place, only that I should soon be coming to London with him; and I remarked, 'Shall I?' and smiled at him, as if in a fit of careless affection. Then he talked runningly of the theatres and pantomimes and London's charms.

The fear I had of this Bench made me passingly conscious of Temple's delicacy in not repeating its name, though why I feared it there was nothing to tell me. I must have dreamed of it just before waking, and I burned for reasonable information concerning it. Temple respected my father too much to speak out the extent of his knowledge on the subject, so we drank our tea with the grandeur of London for our theme, where, Temple assured me, you never had a headache after a carouse overnight: a communication that led me to think the country a far less favourable place of abode for gentlemen. We quitted the house without seeing our host or the captain, and greatly admired by the footmen, the maids, and the grooms for having drunk their masters under the table, which it could not be doubted that we had done, as Temple modestly observed while we sauntered off the grounds under the eyes of the establishment. We had done it fairly, too, with none of those Jack the Giant-Killer tricks my grandfather accused us of.

The squire would not, and he could not, believe our story until he heard the confession from the mouth of

the captain. After that he said we were men and heroes, and he tipped us both, much to Janet Ilchester's advantage, for the squire was a royal giver, and Temple's money had already begun to take the same road as mine.

Temple, in fact, was falling desperately in love; for this reason he shrank from quitting Riversley. I perceived it as clearly as a thing seen through a window-pane. He was always meditating upon dogs, and what might be the price of this dog or that, and whether lap-dogs were good travellers. The fashionable value of pugs filled him with a sort of despair. 'My goodness!' he used an exclamation more suitable to women, 'forty or fifty pounds you say one costs, Richie?'

I pretended to estimate the probable cost of one. 'Yes, about that; but I 'll buy you one, one day or other, Temple.'

The dear little fellow coloured hot; he was too much in earnest to laugh at the absurdity of his being supposed to want a pug for himself, and walked round me, throwing himself into attitudes with shrugs and loud breathings. 'I don't . . . don't think that I . . . I care for nothing but Newfoundlands and mastiffs,' said he. He went on shrugging and kicking up his heels.

'Girls like pugs,' I remarked.

'I fancy they do,' said Temple, with a snort of indifference.

Then I suggested, 'A pocket-knife for the hunting-field is a very good thing.'

'Do you think so?' was Temple's rejoinder, and I saw he was dreadfully afraid of my speaking the person's name for whom it would be such a very good thing.

'You can get one for thirty shillings. We 'll get one when we 're in London. They 're just as useful for women as they are for us, you know.'

'Why, of course they are, if they hunt,' said Temple.

'And we mustn't lose time,' I drew him to the point I had at heart, 'for hunting 'll soon be over. It 's February, mind!'

'Oh, lots of time!' Temple cried out, and on every occasion when I tried to make him understand that I was bursting to visit London, he kept evading me, simply because he hated saying good-bye to Janet Ilchester. His dulness of apprehension in not perceiving that I could not commit a breach of hospitality by begging him downright to start, struck me as extraordinary. And I was so acute. I saw every single idea in his head, every shift of his mind, and how he half knew that he profited by my shunning to say flatly I desired to set out upon the discovery of the Bench. He took the benefit of my shamefacedness, for which I daily punished his. I really felt that I was justified in giving my irritability an airing by curious allusions to Janet; yet, though I made him wince, it was impossible to touch his conscience. He admitted to having repeatedly spoken of London's charms, and 'Oh, yes! you and I 'll go back together, Richie,' and saying that satisfied him: he doubled our engagements with Janet that afternoon, and it was a riding party, a dancing-party, and a drawing of a pond for carp, and we over to Janet, and Janet over to us, until I grew so sick of her I was incapable of summoning a spark of jealousy in order the better to torture Temple.

Now, he was a quick-witted boy. Well, I one day heard Janet address my big dog, Ajax, in the style she usually employed to inform her hearers, and especially the proprietor, that she coveted a thing: 'Oh, you own dear precious pet darling beauty! if I might only feed you every day of my life I should be happy! I curtsey to him every time I see him. If I were his master, the men should all off hats, and the women all curtsey, to Emperor Ajax, my dog! my own! my great, dear,

irresistible love!' Then she nodded at me, 'I would make them, though.' And then at Temple, 'You see if I wouldn't.'

Ajax was a source of pride to me. However, I heard Temple murmur, in a tone totally unlike himself, 'He would be a great protection to you'; and I said to him, 'You know, Temple, I shall be going to London to-morrow or the next day, not later: I don't know when I shall be back. I wish you would dispose of the dog just as you like: get him a kind master or mistress, that 's all.'

I sacrificed my dog to bring Temple to his senses. I thought it would touch him to see how much I could sacrifice just to get an excuse for begging him to start. He did not even thank me. Ajax soon wore one of Janet's collars, like two or three other of the Riversley dogs, and I had the satisfaction of hearing Temple accept my grandfather's invitation for a further fortnight. And, meanwhile, I was the one who was charged with going about looking lovelorn! I smothered my feelings and my reflections on the wisdom of people.

At last my aunt Dorothy found the means of setting me at liberty on the road to London. We had related to her how Captain Bulsted toasted Julia Rippenger, and we had both declared in joke that we were sure the captain wished to be introduced to her. My aunt reserved her ideas on the subject, but by-and-by she proposed to us to ride over to Julia, and engage her to come and stay at Riversley for some days. Kissing me, my aunt said, 'She was my Harry's friend when he was an outcast.'

The words revived my affection for Julia. Strong in the sacred sense of gratitude, I turned on Temple, reproaching him with selfish forgetfulness of her good heart and pretty face. Without defending himself, as he might have done, he entreated me to postpone our journey for a day; he and Janet had some appointment. Here

was given me a noble cause and matter I need not shrink from speaking of. I lashed Temple in my aunt's presence with a rod of real eloquence that astonished her, and him, and myself too; and as he had a sense of guilt not quite explicable in his mind, he consented to bear what was in reality my burden; for Julia had distinguished me and not him with all the signs of affection, and of the two I had the more thoroughly forgotten her; I believe Temple was first in toasting her at Squire Gregory's table. There is nothing like a pent-up secret of the heart for accumulating powers of speech; I mean in youth. The mental distilling process sets in later, and then you have irony instead of eloquence. From brooding on my father, and not daring to mention his name lest I should hear evil of it, my thoughts were a proud family, proud of their origin, proud of their isolation, and not to be able to divine them was for the world to confess itself basely beneath their level. But, when they did pour out, they were tremendous, as Temple found. This oratorical display of mine gave me an ascendancy over him. He adored eloquence, not to say grandiloquence: he was the son of a barrister. 'Let 's go and see her at once, Richie,' he said of Julia. 'I 'm ready to be off as soon as you like; I 'm ready to do anything that will please you'; which was untrue, but it was useless to tell him so. I sighed at my sad gift of penetration, and tossed the fresh example of it into the treasury of vanity.

'Temple,' said I, dissembling a little; 'I tell you candidly: you won't please me by doing anything disagreeable to you. A dog pulled by the collar is not much of a companion. I start for Julia to-morrow before daylight. If you like your bed best, stop there; and mind you amuse Janet for me duing my absence.'

'I 'm not going to let any one make comparisons between us,' Temple muttered.

He dropped dozens of similar remarks, and sometimes talked downright flattery, I had so deeply impressed him.

We breakfasted by candle-light, and rode away on a frosty foggy morning, keeping our groom fifty yards to the rear, a laughable sight, with both his coat-pockets bulging, a couple of Riversley turnover pasties in one, and a bottle of champagne in the other, for our lunch on the road. Now and then, when near him, we galloped for the fun of seeing him nurse the bottle-pocket. He was generally invisible. Temple did not think it strange that we should be riding out in an unknown world with only a little ring, half a stone's-throw clear around us, and blots of copse, and queer vanishing cottages, and hard grey meadows, fir-trees wonderfully magnified, and larches and birches rigged like fairy ships, all starting up to us as we passed, and melting instantly. One could have fancied the fir-trees black torches. And here the shoulder of a hill invited us to race up to the ridge: some way on we came to cross-roads, careless of our luck in hitting the right one: yonder hung a village church in the air, and church-steeple piercing ever so high; and out of the heart of the mist leaped a brook, and to hear it at one moment, and then to have the sharp freezing silence in one's ear, was piercingly weird. It all tossed the mind in my head like hay on a pitchfork. I forgot the existence of everything but what I loved passionately,—and that had no shape, was like a wind.

Up on a knoll of firs in the middle of a heath, glowing rosy in the frost, we dismounted to lunch, leaning against the warm saddles, Temple and I, and Uberly, our groom, who reminded me of a certain tramp of my acquaintance in his decided preference of beer to champagne; he drank, though, and sparkled after his draught. No sooner were we on horseback again—ere the flanks of the dear friendly

brutes were in any way cool—than Temple shouted enthusiastically,—

'Richie, we shall do it yet! I 've been funking, but now I 'm sure we shall do it. Janet said, "What 's the use of my coming over to dine at Riversley if Harry Richmond and you don't come home before ten or eleven o'clock?" I told her we 'd do it by dinner-time:—Don't you like Janet, Richie?—That is, if our horses' hic-hæc-hocks didn't get strained on this hard nominative-plural-masculine of the article road. Don't you fancy yourself dining with the captain, Richie? Dative huic, says old Squire Gregory. I like to see him at dinner, because he loves the smell of his wine. Oh! it 's nothing to boast of, but we did drink them under the table, it can't be denied. Janet heard of it. Hulloa! you talk of a hunting-knife. What do you say to a pair of skates? Here we are in for a frost of six weeks. It strikes me, a pair of skates . . .'

This was the champagne in Temple. In me it did not bubble to speech, and I soon drew him on at a pace that rendered conversation impossible. Uberly shouted after us to spare the horses' legs. We heard him twice out of the deepening fog. I called to Temple that he was right, we should do it. Temple hurrahed rather breathlessly. At the end of an hour I pulled up at an inn, where I left the horses to be groomed and fed, and walked away rapidly as if I knew the town, Temple following me with perfect confidence, and, indeed, I had no intention to deceive him. We entered a new station of a railway.

'Oh!' said Temple, 'the rest of the way by rail.'

When the railway clerk asked me what place I wanted tickets for, London sprang to my mouth promptly in a murmur, and taking the tickets I replied to Temple,—

'The rest of the way by rail. Uberly 's sure to stop at that inn'; but my heart beat as the carriages slid away

with us; an affectionate commiseration for Temple touched me when I heard him count on our being back at Riversley in time to dress for dinner.

He laughed aloud at the idea of our plumping down on Rippenger's school, getting a holiday for the boys, tipping them, and then off with Julia, exactly like two Gods of the Mythology, Apollo and Mercury.

'I often used to think they had the jolliest lives that ever were lived,' he said, and trying to catch glimpses of the country, and musing, and singing, he continued to feel like one of those blissful Gods until wonder at the passage of time supervened. Amazement, when he looked at my watch, struck him dumb. Ten minutes later we were in yellow fog, then in brown. Temple stared at both windows and at me; he jumped from his seat and fell on it, muttering, 'No; nonsense! I say!' but he had accurately recognized London's fog. I left him unanswered to bring up all his senses, which the railway had outstripped, for the contemplation of this fact, that we two were in the city of London.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT FOG AND THE FIRE AT MIDNIGHT

It was London city, and the Bench was the kernel of it to me. I throbbed with excitement, though I sat looking out of the windows into the subterranean atmosphere quite still and firm. When you think long undividedly of a single object it gathers light, and when you draw near it in person the strange thing to your mind is the absence of that light; but I, approaching it in this dense fog, seemed to myself to be only thinking of it a little

more warmly than usual, and instead of fading it reversed the process, and became, from light, luminous. Not being able, however, to imagine the Bench a happy place, I corrected the excess of brightness and gave its walls a pine-torch glow; I set them in the middle of a great square, and hung the standard of England drooping over them in a sort of mournful family pride. Then, because I next conceived it a foreign kind of place, different altogether from that home growth of ours, the Tower of London, I topped it with a multitude of domes of pumpkin or turban shape, resembling the Kremlin of Moscow, which had once leapt up in the eye of Winter, glowing like a million pine-torches, and flung shadows of stretching red horses on the black smoke-drift. But what was the Kremlin, that had seen a city perish, to this Bench where my father languished! There was no comparing them for tragic horror. And the Kremlin had snow-fields around it; this Bench was caught out of sight, hemmed in by an atmosphere thick as Charon breathed; it might as well be underground.

'Oh! it 's London,' Temple went on, correcting his incorrigible doubts about it. He jumped on the platform; we had to call out not to lose one another. 'I say, Richie, this is London,' he said, linking his arm in mine: 'you know by the size of the station; and besides, there 's the fog. Oh! it 's London. We 've overshot it, we 're positively in London.'

I could spare no sympathy for his feelings, and I did not respond to his inquiring looks. Now that we were here I certainly wished myself away, though I would not have retreated, and for awhile I was glad of the discomforts besetting me; my step was hearty as I led on, meditating upon asking some one the direction to the Bench presently. We had to walk, and it was nothing but traversing on a slippery pavement atmo-

spheric circles of black brown and brown red, and sometimes a larger circle of pale yellow; the colours of old bruised fruits, medlars, melons, and the smell of them; nothing is more desolate. Neither of us knew where we were, nor where we were going. We struggled through an interminable succession of squalid streets, from the one lamp visible to its neighbour in the darkness: you might have fancied yourself peering at the head of an old saint on a smoky canvas; it was like the painting of light rather than light. Figures rushed by; we saw no faces.

Temple spoke solemnly: 'Our dinner-hour at home is half-past six.'

A street-boy overheard him and chaffed him. Temple got the worst of it, and it did him good, for he had the sweetest nature in the world. We declined to be attended by link-boys; they would have hurt our sense of independence. Possessed of a sovereign faith that, by dint of resolution, I should ultimately penetrate to the great square enclosing the Bench, I walked with the air of one who had the map of London in his eye and could thread it blindfold. Temple was thereby deceived into thinking that I must somehow have learnt the direction I meant to take, and knew my way, though at the slightest indication of my halting and glancing round his suspicions began to boil, and he was for asking some one the name of the ground we stood on: he murmured, 'Fellows get lost in London.' By this time he clearly understood that I had come to London on purpose: he could not but be aware of the object of my coming, and I was too proud, and he still too delicate, to allude to it.

The fog choked us. Perhaps it took away the sense of hunger by filling us as if we had eaten a dinner of soot. We had no craving to eat until long past the dinner-hour in Temple's house, and then I would rather

have plunged into a bath and a bed than have been requested to sit at a feast; Temple too, I fancy. We knew we were astray without speaking of it. Temple said, 'I wish we hadn't drunk that champagne.' It seemed to me years since I had tasted the delicious crushing of the sweet bubbles in my mouth. But I did not blame them; I was after my father: he, dear little fellow, had no light ahead except his devotion to me: he must have had a touch of conscious guilt regarding his recent behaviour, enough to hold him from complaining formally. He complained of a London without shops and lights, wondered how any one could like to come to it in a fog, and so forth; and again regretted our having drunk champagne in the morning; a sort of involuntary whimpering easily forgiven to him, for I knew he had a gallant heart. I determined, as an act of signal condescension, to accost the first person we met, male or female, for Temple's sake. Having come to this resolve, which was to be an open confession that I had misled him, wounding to my pride, I hoped eagerly for the hearing of a footfall. We were in a labyrinth of dark streets where no one was astir. A wretched dog trotted up to us, followed at our heels a short distance, and left us as if he smelt no luck about us; our cajoleries were unavailing to keep that miserable companion.

'Sinbad escaped from the pit by tracking a lynx,' I happened to remark. Temple would not hear of Sinbad.

'Oh, come, we 're not Mussulmen,' said he; 'I declare, Richie, if I saw a church open, I 'd go in and sleep there. Were you thinking of tracking the dog, then? Beer may be had somewhere. We shall have to find an hotel. What can the time be?'

I owed it to him to tell him, so I climbed a lamp-post and spelt out the hour by my watch. When I

descended we were three. A man had his hands on Temple's shoulders, examining his features.

'Now speak,' the man said, roughly.

I was interposing, but Temple cried, 'All right, Richie, we are two to one.'

The man groaned. I asked him what he wanted.

'My son! I've lost my son,' the man replied, and walked away; and he would give no answer to our questions.

I caught hold of the lamp-post, overcome. I meant to tell Temple, in response to the consoling touch of his hand, that I hoped the poor man would discover his son, but said instead, 'I wish we could see the Bench to-night.' Temple exclaimed, 'Ah!' pretending by his tone of voice that we had recently discussed our chance of it, and then he ventured to inform me that he imagined he had heard of the place being shut up after a certain hour of the night.

My heart felt released, and gushed with love for him. 'Very well, Temple,' I said: 'then we'll wait till to-morrow, and strike out for some hotel now.'

Off we went at a furious pace. Saddlebank's goose was reverted to by both of us with an exchange of assurances that we should meet a dish the fellow to it before we slept.

'As for life,' said I, as soon as the sharp pace had fetched my breathing to a regular measure, 'adventures are what I call life.'

Temple assented. 'They're capital, if you only see the end of them.'

We talked of Ulysses and Penelope. Temple blamed him for leaving Calypso. I thought Ulysses was right, otherwise we should have had no slaying of the Suitors: but Temple shyly urged that to have a Goddess caring for you (and she was handsomer than Penelope, who

must have been an oldish woman) was something to make you feel as you do on a hunting morning, when there are half-a-dozen riding-habits speckling the field—a whole glorious day your own among them! This view appeared to me very captivating, save for an obstruction in my mind, which was, that Goddesses were always conceived by me as statues. They talked and they moved, it was true, but the touch of them was marble; and they smiled and frowned, but they had no variety: they were never warm.

'If I thought that!' muttered Temple, puffing at the raw fog. He admitted he had thought just the contrary, and that the cold had suggested to him the absurdity of leaving a Goddess.

'Look here, Temple,' said I, 'has it never struck you? I won't say I 'm like him. It 's true I 've always admired Ulysses; he could fight best, talk best, and plough, and box, and how clever he was! Take him all round, who wouldn't rather have had him for a father than Achilles? And there were just as many women in love with him.'

'More,' said Temple.

'Well, then,' I continued, thanking him in my heart, for it must have cost him something to let Ulysses be set above Achilles, 'Telemachus is the one I mean. He was in search of his father. He found him at last. Upon my honour, Temple, when I think of it, I 'm ashamed to have waited so long. I call that luxury I 've lived in senseless. Yes! while I was uncertain whether my father had enough to eat or not.'

'I say! hush!' Temple breathed, in pain at such allusions. 'Richie, the squire has finished his bottle by about now; bottle number two. He won't miss us till the morning, but Miss Beltham will. She 'll be at your bedroom door three or four times in the night,

I know. It 's getting darker and darker, we must be in some dreadful part of London.'

The contrast he presented to my sensations between our pleasant home and this foggy solitude gave me a pang of dismay. I diverged from my favourite straight line, which seemed to pierce into the bowels of the earth, sharp to the right. Soon or late after, I cannot tell, we were in the midst of a thin stream of people, mostly composed of boys and young women, going at double time, hooting and screaming with the delight of loosened animals, not quite so agreeably; but animals never hunted on a better scent. A dozen turnings in their company brought us in front of a fire. There we saw two houses preyed on by the flames, just as if a lion had his paws on a couple of human creatures, devouring them; we heard his jaws, the cracking of bones, shrieks, and the voracious in-and-out of his breath edged with anger. A girl by my side exclaimed, 'It 's not the Bench, after all! Would I have run to see a paltry two-story washer-woman's mangling-shed flare up, when six penn'orth of squibs and shavings and a cracker make twice the fun!'

I turned to her, hardly able to speak. 'Where 's the Bench, if you please?' She pointed. I looked on an immense high wall. The blunt flames of the fire opposite threw a sombre glow on it.

The girl said, 'And don't you go hopping into debt, my young cock-sparrow, or you 'll know one side o' the turnkey better than t' other.' She had a friend with her who chid her for speaking so freely.

'Is it too late to go in to-night?' I asked.

She answered that it was, and that she and her friend were the persons to show me the way in there. Her friend answered more sensibly: 'Yes, you can't go in there before some time in the morning.'

I learnt from her that the Bench was a debtors' prison.

The saucy girl of the pair asked me for money. I handed her a crown-piece.

'Now won't you give another big bit to my friend?' said she.

I had no change, and the well-mannered girl bade me never mind, the saucy one pressed for it, and for a treat. She was amusing in her talk of the quantity of different fires she had seen; she had also seen accidental-death corpses, but never a suicide in the act; and here she regretted the failure of her experiences. This conversation of a good-looking girl amazed me. Presently Temple cried, 'A third house caught, and no engines yet! Richie, there 's an old woman in her night-dress; we can't stand by.'

The saucy girl joked at the poor half-naked old woman. Temple stood humping and agitating his shoulders like a cat before it springs. Both the girls tried to stop us. The one I liked best seized my watch, and said, 'Leave this to me to take care of,' and I had no time to wrestle for it. I had a glimpse of her face that let me think she was not fooling me, the watch-chain flew off my neck, Temple and I clove through the crowd of gapers. We got into the heat, which was in a minute scorching. Three men were under the window; they had sung out to the old woman above to drop a blanket—she tossed them a water-jug. She was saved by the blanket of a neighbour. Temple and I strained at one corner of it to catch her.

She came down, the men said, like a singed turkey. The flames illuminated her as she descended. There was a great deal of laughter in the crowd, but I was shocked. Temple shared the painful impression produced on me. I cannot express my relief when the old woman was wrapped in the blanket which had broken her descent, and stood like a blot instead of a figure. I handed a

sovereign to the three men, complimenting them on the humanity of their dispositions. They cheered us, and the crowd echoed the cheer, and Temple and I made our way back to the two girls: both of us lost our pocket-handkerchiefs, and Temple a penknife as well. Then the engines arrived and soused the burning houses. We were all in a crimson mist, boys smoking, girls laughing and staring, men hallooing, hats and caps flying about, fights going on, people throwing their furniture out of the windows. The great wall of the Bench was awful in its reflection of the labouring flames—it rose out of sight like the flame-tops till the columns of water brought them down. I thought of my father, and of my watch. The two girls were not visible. 'A glorious life a fireman's!' said Temple.

The firemen were on the roofs of the houses, handsome as Greek heroes, and it really did look as if they were engaged in slaying an enormous dragon, that hissed and tongued at them, and writhed its tail, paddling its broken big red wings in the pit of wreck and smoke, twisting and darkening—something fine to conquer, I felt with Temple.

A mutual disgust at the inconvenience created by the appropriation of our pocket-handkerchiefs by members of the crowd, induced us to disentangle ourselves from it without confiding to any one our perplexity for supper and a bed. We were now extremely thirsty. I had visions of my majority bottles of Burgundy, lying under John Thresher's care at Dipwell, and would have abandoned them all for one on the spot. After ranging about the outskirts of the crowd, seeking the two girls, we walked away, not so melancholy but that a draught of porter would have cheered us. Temple punned on the loss of my watch, and excused himself for a joke neither of us had spirit to laugh at. Just as I was saying, with

a last glance at the fire, 'Anyhow, it would have gone in that crowd,' the nice good girl ran up behind us, crying, 'There!' as she put the watch-chain over my head.

'There, Temple,' said I, 'didn't I tell you so?' and Temple kindly supposed so.

The girl said, 'I was afraid I 'd missed you, little fellow, and you 'd take me for a thief, and thank God, I 'm no thief yet. I rushed into the crowd to meet you after you caught that old creature, and I could have kissed you both, you 're so brave.'

'We always go in for it together,' said Temple.

I made an offer to the girl of a piece of gold. 'Oh, I 'm poor,' she cried, yet kept her hand off it like a bird alighting on ground, not on prey. When I compelled her to feel the money tight, she sighed, 'If I wasn't so poor! I don't want your gold. Why are you out so late?'

We informed her of our arrival from the country, and wanderings in the fog.

'And you 'll say you 're not tired, I know,' the girl remarked, and laughed to hear how correctly she had judged of our temper. Our thirst and hunger, however, filled her with concern, because of our not being used to it as she was, and no place was open to supply our wants. Her friend, the saucy one, accompanied by a man evidently a sailor, joined us, and the three had a consultation away from Temple and me, at the end of which the sailor, whose name was Joe, raised his leg dancingly, and smacked it. We gave him our hands to shake, and understood, without astonishment, that we were invited on board his ship to partake of refreshment. We should not have been astonished had he said on board his balloon. Down through thick fog of a lighter colour, we made our way to a narrow lane leading to the river-side, where two men stood thumping their arms across their breasts,

smoking pipes, and swearing. We entered a boat and were rowed to a ship. I was not aware how frozen and befogged my mind and senses had become until I had taken a desperate and long gulp of smoking rum-and-water, and then the whole of our adventures from morning to midnight, with the fir-trees in the country fog, and the lamps in the London fog, and the man who had lost his son, the fire, the Bench, the old woman with her fowl-like cry and limbs in the air, and the row over the misty river, swam flashing before my eyes, and I cried out to the two girls, who were drinking out of one glass with the sailor Joe, my entertainer, 'Well, I 'm awake now!' and slept straight off the next instant.

CHAPTER XII

WE FIND OURSELVES BOUND ON A VOYAGE

It seemed to me that I had but taken a turn from right to left, or gone round a wheel, when I repeated the same words, and I heard Temple somewhere near me mumble something like them. He drew a long breath, so did I: we cleared our throats with a sort of whinny simultaneously. The enjoyment of lying perfectly still, refreshed, incurious, unexcited, yet having our minds animated, excursive, reaping all the incidents of our lives at leisure, and making a dream of our latest experiences, kept us tranquil and incommunicative. Occasionally we let fall a sigh fathoms deep, then by-and-by began blowing a bit of a wanton laugh at the end of it. I raised my foot and saw the boot on it, which accounted for an uneasy sensation setting in through my frame.

I said softly, 'What a pleasure it must be for horses to be groomed!'

'Just what I was thinking!' said Temple.

We started up on our elbows, and one or the other cried: 'There 's a chart! These are bunks! Hark at the row overhead! We 're in a ship! The ship 's moving! Is it foggy this morning? It 's time to get up! I 've slept in my clothes! Oh, for a dip! How I smell of smoke! What a noise of a steamer! And the squire at Riversley! Fancy Uberly's tale!'

Temple, with averted face, asked me whether I meant to return to Riversley that day. I assured him I would, on my honour, if possible; and of course he also would have to return there. 'Why, you 've an appointment with Janet Ilchester,' said I, 'and we may find a pug; we 'll buy the hunting-knife and the skates. And she shall know you saved an old woman's life.'

'No, don't talk about that,' Temple entreated me, biting his lip. 'Richie, we 're going fast through the water. It reminds me of breakfast. I should guess the hour to be nine A.M.'

My watch was unable to assist us; the hands pointed to half-past four, and were fixed. We ran up on deck. Looking over the stern of the vessel, across a line of rippling eddying red gold, we saw the sun low upon cushions of beautiful cloud; no trace of fog anywhere; blue sky overhead, and a mild breeze blowing.

'Sunrise,' I said.

Temple answered, 'Yes,' most uncertainly.

We looked round. A steam-tug was towing our ship out toward banks of red-reflecting cloud, and a smell of sea air.

'Why, that 's the East there!' cried Temple. We faced about to the sun, and behold, he was actually sinking!

'Nonsense!' we exclaimed in a breath. From seaward to this stupefying sunset we stood staring. The river

stretched to broad lengths; gulls were on the grey water, knots of seaweed, and the sea-foam curled in advance of us.

'By jingo!' Temple spoke out, musing, 'here 's a whole day struck out of our existence.'

'It can't be!' said I, for that any sensible being could be tricked of a piece of his life in that manner I thought a preposterous notion.

But the sight of a lessening windmill in the West, shadows eastward, the wide water, and the air now full salt, convinced me we two had slept through an entire day, and were passing rapidly out of hail of our native land.

'We must get these fellows to put us on shore at once,' said Temple: 'we won't stop to eat. There 's a town; a boat will row us there in half-an-hour. Then we can wash, too. I 've got an idea nothing 's clean here. And confound these fellows for not having the civility to tell us they were going to start!'

We were rather angry, a little amused, not in the least alarmed at our position. A sailor, to whom we applied for an introduction to the captain, said he was busy. Another gave us a similar reply, with a monstrous grimace which was beyond our comprehension. The sailor Joe was nowhere to be seen. None of the sailors appeared willing to listen to us, though they stopped as they were running by to lend half an ear to what we had to say. Some particular movement was going on in the ship. Temple was the first to observe that the steam-tug was casting us loose, and cried he, 'She 'll take us on board and back to London Bridge. Let 's hail her.' He sang out, 'Whoop! ahoy!' I meanwhile had caught sight of Joe.

'Well, young gentleman!' he accosted me, and he hoped I had slept well. My courteous request to him to

bid the tug stand by to take us on board, only caused him to wear a look of awful gravity. 'You 're such a deuce of a sleeper,' he said. 'You see, we had to be off early to make up for forty hours lost by that there fog. I tried to wake you both; no good; so I let you snore away. We took up our captain mid-way down the river, and now you 're in his hands, and he 'll do what he likes with you, and that 's a fact, and my opinion is you 'll see a foreign shore before you 're in the arms of your family again.'

At these words I had the horrible sensation of being caged, and worse, transported into the bargain.

I insisted on seeing the captain. A big bright round moon was dancing over the vessel's bowsprit, and this, together with the tug thumping into the distance, and the land receding, gave me—coming on my wrath—suffocating emotions.

No difficulties were presented in my way. I was led up to a broad man in a pilot-coat, who stood square, and looked by the bend of his eyebrows as if he were always making head against a gale. He nodded to my respectful salute. 'Cabin,' he said, and turned his back to me.

I addressed him, 'Excuse me, I want to go on shore, captain. I must and will go! I am here by some accident; you have accidentally overlooked me here. I wish to treat you like a gentleman, but I won't be detained.'

Joe spoke a word to the captain, who kept his back as broad to me as a school-slate for geography and Euclid's propositions.

'Cabin, cabin,' the captain repeated.

I tried to get round him to dash a furious sentence or so in his face, since there was no producing any impression on his back; but he occupied the whole of a way

blocked with wire-coil, and rope, and boxes, and it would have been ridiculous to climb this barricade when by another right-about-face he could in a minute leave me volleying at the blank space between his shoulders.

Joe touched my arm, which, in as friendly a way as I could assume, I bade him not do a second time; for I could ill contain myself as it was, and beginning to think I had been duped and tricked, I was ready for hostilities. I could hardly bear meeting Temple on my passage to the cabin. 'Captain Jasper Welsh,' he was reiterating, as if sounding it to discover whether it had an ominous ring: it was the captain's name, that he had learnt from one of the seamen.

Irritated by his repetition of it, I said, I know not why, or how the words came: 'A highwayman notorious for his depredations in the vicinity of the city of Bristol.'

This set Temple off laughing: 'And so he bought a ship and had traps laid down to catch young fellows for ransom.'

I was obliged to request Temple not to joke, but the next moment I had launched Captain Jasper Welsh on a piratical exploit; Temple lifted the veil from his history, revealing him amid the excesses of a cannibal feast. I dragged him before a British jury; Temple hanged him in view of an excited multitude. As he boasted that there was the end of Captain Welsh, I broke the rope. But Temple spoiled my triumph by depriving him of the use of his lower limbs after the fall, for he was a heavy man. I could not contradict it, and therefore pitched all his ship's crew upon the gallows in a rescue. Temple allowed him to be carried off by his faithful ruffians, only stipulating that the captain was never after able to release his neck from the hangman's slip-

knot. The consequence was that he wore a shirt-collar up to his eyebrows for concealment by day, and a pillow-case over his head at night, and his wife said she was a deceived unhappy woman, and died of curiosity.

The talking of even such nonsense as this was a relief to us in our impatience and helplessness, with the lights of land heaving far distant to our fretful sight through the cabin windows.

When we had to talk reasonably we were not so successful. Captain Welsh was one of those men who show you, whether you care to see them or not, all the processes by which they arrive at an idea of you, upon which they forthwith shape their course. Thus, when he came to us in the cabin, he took the oil-lamp in his hand and examined our faces by its light; he had no reply to our remonstrances and petitions: all he said was, 'Humph! well, I suppose you 're both gentlemen born'; and he insisted on prosecuting his scrutiny without any reference to the tenour of our observations.

We entreated him half imperiously to bring his ship to and put us on shore in a boat. He bunched up his mouth, remarking, 'Know their grammar: habit o' speaking to grooms, eh?—humph.' We offered to pay largely. 'Loose o' their cash,' was his comment, and so on; and he was the more exasperating to us because he did not look an evil-minded man; only he appeared to be cursed with an evil opinion of us. I tried to remove it; I spoke forbearingly. Temple, imitating me, was sugar-sweet. We exonerated the captain from blame, excused him for his error, named the case a mistake on both sides. That long sleep of ours, we said, was really something laughable; we laughed at the recollection of it, a lamentable piece of merriment.

Our artfulness and patience becoming exhausted, for

the captain had vouchsafed us no direct answer, I said at last, 'Captain Welsh, here we are on board your ship: will you tell us what you mean to do with us?'

He now said bluntly, 'I will.'

'You 'll behave like a man of honour,' said I, and to that he cried vehemently, 'I will.'

'Well, then,' said I, 'call out the boat, if you please; we 're anxious to be home.'

'So you shall!' the captain shouted, 'and per ship—my barque Priscilla; and better men than you left, or I 'm no Christian.'

Temple said briskly, 'Thank you, captain.'

'You may wait awhile with that, my lad,' he answered; and, to our astonishment, recommended us to go and clean our faces and prepare to drink some tea at his table.

'Thank you very much, captain, we 'll do that when we 're on shore,' said we.

'You 'll have black figure-heads and empty gizzards, then, by that time,' he remarked. We beheld him turning over the leaves of a Bible.

Now, this sight of the Bible gave me a sense of personal security, and a notion of hypocrisy in his conduct as well; and perceiving that we had conjectured falsely as to his meaning to cast us on shore per ship, his barque Priscilla, I burst out in great heat, 'What! we are prisoners? You dare to detain us?'

Temple chimed in, in a similar strain. Fairly enraged, we flung at him without anything of what I thought eloquence.

The captain ruminated up and down the columns of his Bible.

I was stung to feel that we were like two small terriers baiting a huge mild bull. At last he said, 'The story of the Prodigal Son.'

'Oh!' groaned Temple, at the mention of this worn-out old fellow, who has gone in harness to tracts ever since he ate the fatted calf.

But the captain never heeded his interruption.

'Young gentlemen, I 've finished it while you 've been barking at me. If I 'd had him early in life on board my vessel, I hope I 'm not presumptuous in saying —the Lord forgive me if I be so!—I 'd have stopped his downward career—ay, so!—with a trip in the right direction. The Lord, young gentlemen, has not thrown you into my hands for no purpose whatsoever. Thank him on your knees to-night, and thank Joseph Double, my mate, when you rise, for he was the instrument of saving you from bad company. If this was a vessel where you 'd hear an oath or smell the smell of liquor, I 'd have let you run when there was terra firma within stone's throw. I came on board, I found you both asleep, with those marks of dissipation round your eyes, and I swore—in the Lord's name, mind you—I 'd help pluck you out of the pit while you had none but one leg in. It 's said! It 's no use barking. I am not to be roused. The devil in me is chained by the waist, and a twenty-pound weight on his tongue. With your assistance I 'll do the same for the devil in you. Since you 've had plenty of sleep, I 'll trouble you to commit to memory the whole story of the Prodigal Son 'twixt now and morrow's sunrise. We 'll have our commentary on it after labour done. Labour you will in my vessel, for your soul's health. And let me advise you not to talk; in your situation talking 's temptation to lying. You 'll do me the obligation to feed at my table. And when I hand you back to your parents, why, they 'll thank me, if you won't. But it 's not thanks I look for: it 's my bounden Christian duty I look to. I reckon a couple o' stray lambs equal to one lost sheep.'

The captain uplifted his arm, ejaculating solemnly, 'By!' and faltered. 'You were going to swear!' said Temple, with savage disdain.

'By the blessing of Omnipotence! I 'll save a pair o' pups from turning wolves. And I 'm a weak mortal man, that 's too true.'

'He *was* going to swear,' Temple muttered to me.

I considered the detection of Captain Welsh's hypocrisy unnecessary, almost a condescension toward familiarity; but the ire in my bosom was boiling so that I found it impossible to roll out the flood of eloquence with which I was big. Soon after, I was trying to bribe the man with all my money and my watch.

'Who gave you that watch?' said he.

'Downright Church catechism!' muttered Temple.

'My grandfather,' said I.

The captain's head went like a mechanical hammer, to express something indescribable.

'My grandfather,' I continued, 'will pay you handsomely for any service you do to me and my friend.'

'Now, that 's not far off forgeing,' said the captain, in a tone as much as to say we were bad all over.

I saw the waters slide by his cabin-windows. My desolation, my humiliation, my chained fury, tumbled together. Out it came—

'Captain, do behave to us like a gentleman, and you shall never repent it. Our relatives will be miserable about us. They—captain!—they don't know where we are. We haven't even a change of clothes. Of course we know we 're at your mercy, but do behave like an honest man. You shall be paid or not, just as you please, for putting us on shore, but we shall be eternally grateful to you. Of course you mean kindly to us; we see that——'

'I thank the Lord for it!' he interposed.

'Only you really are under a delusion. It 's extraordinary. You can't be quite in your right senses about us; you must be—I don't mean to speak disrespectfully—what we call on shore, cracked about us . . .'

'Doddered, don't they say in one of the shires?' he remarked.

Half-encouraged, and in the belief that I might be getting eloquent, I appealed to his manliness. Why should he take advantage of a couple of boys? I struck the key of his possible fatherly feelings: What misery were not our friends suffering now. ('Ay, a bucketful now saves an ocean in time to come!' he flung in his word.) I bade him, with more pathetic dignity, reflect on the dreadful hiatus in our studies.

'Is that Latin or Greek?' he asked.

I would not reply to the cold-blooded question. He said the New Testament was written in Greek, he knew, and happy were those who could read it in the original.

'Well, and how can we be learning to read it on board ship?' said Temple, an observation that exasperated me because it seemed more to the point than my lengthy speech, and betrayed that he thought so; however, I took it up:—

'How can we be graduating for our sphere in life, Captain Welsh, on board your vessel? Tell us that.'

He played thumb and knuckles on his table. Just when I was hoping that good would come of the senseless tune, Temple cried,

'Tell us what your exact intentions are, Captain Welsh. What do you mean to do with us?'

'Mean to take you the voyage out and the voyage home, Providence willing,' said the captain, and he rose.

We declined his offer of tea, though I fancy we could have gnawed at a bone.

'There 's no compulsion in that matter,' he said. 'You share my cabin while you 're my guests, shipmates, and apprentices in the path of living; my cabin and my substance, the same as if you were what the North-countrymen call bairns o' mine: I 've none o' my own. My wife was a barren woman. I 've none but my old mother at home. Have your sulks out, lads; you 'll come round like the Priscilla on a tack, and discover you 've made way by it.'

We quitted his cabin, bowing stiffly.

Temple declared old Rippenger was better than this canting rascal.

The sea was around us, a distant yellow twinkle telling of land.

'His wife a barren woman! what 's that to us!' Temple went on, exploding at intervals. 'So was Sarah. His cabin and his substance! He talks more like a preacher than a sailor. I should like to see him in a storm! He 's no sailor at all. His men hate him. It wouldn't be difficult to get up a mutiny on board this ship. Richie, I understand the whole plot: he 's in want of cabin-boys. The fellow has impressed us. We shall have to serve till we touch land. Thank God, there 's a British consul everywhere; I say that seriously. I love my country; may she always be powerful! My life is always at her—— Did you feel that pitch of the ship? Of all the names ever given to a vessel, I do think Priscilla is without exception the most utterly detestable. Oh! there again. No, it 'll be too bad, Richie, if we 're beaten in this way.'

'If *you* are beaten,' said I, scarcely venturing to speak lest I should cry or be sick.

We both felt that the vessel was conspiring to ruin our

self-respect. I set my head to think as hard as possible on Latin verses (my instinct must have drawn me to them as to a species of intellectual biscuit steeped in spirit, tough, and comforting, and fundamentally opposed to existing circumstances, otherwise I cannot account for the attraction). They helped me for a time; they kept off self-pity, and kept the machinery of the mind at work. They lifted me, as it were, to an upper floor removed from the treacherously sighing Priscilla. But I came down quickly with a crash; no dexterous management of my mental resources could save me from the hemp-like smell of the ship, nor would leaning over the taffrail, nor lying curled under a tarpaulin. The sailors heaped pilot-coats upon us. It was a bad ship, they said, to be sick on board of, for no such thing as brandy was allowed in the old Priscilla. Still I am sure I tasted some before I fell into a state of semi-insensibility. As in a trance I heard Temple's moans, and the captain's voice across the gusty wind, and the forlorn crunching of the ship down great waves. The captain's figure was sometimes stooping over us, more great-coats were piled on us; sometimes the wind whistled thinner than one fancies the shrieks of creatures dead of starvation and restless, that spend their souls in a shriek as long as they can hold it on, say nursery-maids; the ship made a truce with the waters and grunted; we took two or three playful blows, we were drenched with spray, uphill we laboured, we caught the moon in a net of rigging, away we plunged; we mounted to plunge again and again. I reproached the vessel in argument for some imaginary inconsistency. Memory was like a heavy barrel on my breast, rolling with the sea.

CHAPTER XIII

WE CONDUCT SEVERAL LEARNED ARGUMENTS WITH THE CAPTAIN OF THE PRISCILLA

Captain Welsh soon conquered us. The latest meal we had eaten was on the frosty common under the fir-trees. After a tremendous fast, with sea-sickness supervening, the eggs and bacon, and pleasant benevolent-smelling tea on the captain's table were things not to be resisted by two healthy boys who had previously stripped and faced buckets of maddening ice-cold salt-water, dashed at us by a jolly sailor. An open mind for new impressions came with the warmth of our clothes. We ate, bearing within us the souls of injured innocents; nevertheless, we were thankful, and, to the captain's grace, a long one, we bowed heads decently. It was a glorious breakfast, for which land and sea had prepared us in about equal degrees: I confess, my feelings when I jumped out of the cabin were almost those of one born afresh to life and understanding. Temple and I took counsel. We agreed that sulking would be ridiculous, unmanly, ungentlemanly. The captain had us fast, as if we were under a lion's paw; he was evidently a well-meaning man, a fanatic deluded concerning our characters: the barque Priscilla was bound for a German port, and should arrive there in a few days,—why not run the voyage merrily since we were treated with kindness? Neither the squire nor Temple's father could complain of our conduct; we were simply victims of an error that was assisting us to a knowledge of the world, a youth's proper ambition. 'And we 're not going to be starved,' said Temple.

I smiled, thinking I perceived the reason why I had failed in my oration over-night; so I determined that on no future occasion would I let pride stand in the way of provender. Breakfast had completely transformed us. We held it due to ourselves that we should demand explanations from Joseph Double, the mate, and then, after hearing him, furnish them with a cordial alacrity to which we might have attached unlimited credence had he not protested against our dreaming him to have supplied hot rum-and-water on board, we wrote our names and addresses in the captain's log-book, and immediately asked permission to go to the mast-head. He laughed. Out of his cabin there was no smack of the preacher in him. His men said he was a stout seaman, mad on the subject of grog and girls. Why, it was on account of grog and girls that he was giving us this dish of salt-water to purify us! Grog and girls! cried we. We vowed upon our honour as gentlemen we had tasted grog for the first time in our lives on board the Priscilla. How about the girls? they asked. We informed them we knew none but girls who were ladies. Thereupon one sailor nodded, one sent up a crow, one said the misfortune of the case lay in all girls being such precious fine ladies; and one spoke in dreadfully blank language, he accused us of treating the Priscilla as a tavern for the entertainment of bad company, stating that he had helped to row me and my associates from the shore to the ship.

'Poor Mr. Double!' says he; 'there was only one way for him to jump you two young gentlemen out o' that snapdragon bowl you was in—or quashmire, call it; so he 'ticed you on board wi' the bait you was swallowing, which was making the devil serve the Lord's turn. And I 'll remember that night, for I yielded to swearing, and drank too!' The other sailors roared with laughter.

I tipped them, not to appear offended by their

suspicions. We thought them all hypocrites, and were as much in error as if we had thought them all honest.

Things went fairly well with the exception of the lessons in Scripture. Our work was mere playing at sailoring, helping furl sails, haul ropes, study charts, carry messages, and such like. Temple made his voice shrewdly emphatic to explain to the captain that we liked the work, but that such lessons as these out of Scripture were what the veriest youngsters were crammed with.

'Such lessons as these, maybe, don't have the meaning on land they get to have on the high seas,' replied the captain: 'and those youngsters you talk of were not called in to throw a light on passages: for I may teach you ship's business aboard my barque, but we 're all children inside the Book.'

He groaned heartily to hear that our learning lay in the direction of Pagan Gods and Goddesses, and heathen historians and poets; adding, it was not new to him, and perhaps that was why the world was as it was. Nor did he wonder, he said, at our running from studies of those filthy writings loose upon London; it was as natural as dunghill steam. Temple pretended he was forced by the captain's undue severity to defend Venus; he said, I thought rather wittily, 'Sailors ought to have a respect for her, for she was born in the middle of the sea, and she steered straight for land, so she must have had a pretty good idea of navigation.'

But the captain answered none the less keenly, 'She had her idea of navigating, as the devil of mischief always has, in the direction where there 's most to corrupt; and, my lad, she teaches the navigation that leads to the bottom beneath us.'

He might be right, still our mien was evil in reciting the lessons from Scripture; and though Captain Welsh

had intelligence we could not draw into it the how and the why of the indignity we experienced. We had rather he had been a savage captain, to have braced our spirits to sturdy resistance, instead of a mild, good-humoured man of kind intentions, who lent us his linen to wear, fed us at his table, and taxed our most gentlemanly feelings to find excuses for him. Our way of revenging ourselves becomingly was to laud the heroes of antiquity, as if they had possession of our souls and touched the fountain of worship. Whenever Captain Welsh exclaimed, 'Well done,' or the equivalent, 'That 's an idea,' we referred him to Plutarch for our great exemplar. It was Alcibiades gracefully consuming his black broth that won the captain's thanks for theological acuteness, or the young Telemachus suiting his temper to the dolphin's moods, since he must somehow get on shore on the dolphin's back. Captain Welsh could not perceive in Temple the personifier of Alcibiades, nor Telemachus in me; but he was aware of an obstinate obstruction behind our compliance. This he called the devil coiled like a snake in its winter sleep. He hurled texts at it openly, or slyly dropped a particularly heavy one, in the hope of surprising it with a death-blow. We beheld him poring over his Bible for texts that should be sovereign medicines for us, deadly for the devil within us. Consequently, we were on the defensive: bits of Cicero, bits of Seneca, soundly and nobly moral, did service on behalf of Paganism; we remembered them certainly almost as if an imp had brought them from afar. Nor had we any desire to be in opposition to the cause he supported. What we were opposed to was the dogmatic arrogance of a just but ignorant man, who had his one specific for everything, and saw mortal sickness in all other remedies or recreations. Temple said to him,—

'If the Archbishop of Canterbury were to tell me

Greek and Latin authors are bad for me, I should listen to his remarks, because he 's a scholar: he knows the languages and knows what they contain.'

Captain Welsh replied,—

'If the Archbishop o' Canterbury sailed the sea, and lived in Foul Alley, Waterside, when on shore, and so felt what it is to toss on top of the waves o' perdition, he 'd understand the value of a big, clean, well-manned, well-provisioned ship, instead o' your galliots wi' gaudy sails, your barges that can't rise to a sea, your yachts that run to port like mother's pets at first pipe o' the storm, your trim-built wherries.'

'So you 'd have only one sort of vessel afloat!' said I. 'There 's the difference of a man who 's a scholar.'

'I 'd have,' said the captain, 'every lad like you, my lad, trained in the big ship, and he wouldn't capsize, and be found betrayed by his light timbers as I found you. Serve your apprenticeship in the Lord's three-decker; then to command what you may.'

'No, no, Captain Welsh,' says Temple: 'you must grind at Latin and Greek when you 're a chick, or you won't ever master the rudiments. Upon my honour, I declare it 's the truth, you must. If you 'd like to try, and are of a mind for a go at Greek, we 'll do our best to help you through the aorists. It looks harder than Latin, but after a start it 's easier. Only, I 'm afraid your three-decker's apprenticeship 'll stand in your way.'

'Greek 's to be done for me; I can pay clever gentlemen for doing Greek for me,' said the captain. 'The knowledge and the love of virtue I must do for myself; and not to be wrecked, I must do it early.'

'Well, that 's neither learning nor human nature,' said I.

'It 's the knowledge o' the right rules for human nature, my lad.'

'Would you kidnap youngsters to serve in your ship, captain?'

'I 'd bless the wind that blew them there, foul or not, my lad.'

'And there they 'd stick when you had them, captain?'

'I 'd think it was the Lord's will they should stick there awhile, my lad—yes.'

'And what of their parents?'

'Youngsters out like gossamers on a wind, their parents are where they sow themselves, my lad.'

'I call that hard on the real parents, Captain Welsh,' said Temple.

'It 's harder on Providence when parents breed that kind o' light creature, my lad.'

We were all getting excited, talking our best, such as it was; the captain leaning over his side of the table, clasping his hands unintentionally preacher-like; we on our side supporting our chins on our fists, quick to be at him. Temple was brilliant; he wanted to convert the captain, and avowed it.

'For,' said he, 'you 're not like one of those tract-fellows. You 're a man we can respect, a good seaman, master of your ship, and hearty, and no mewing sanctimoniousness, and we can see and excuse your mistake as to us two; but now, there 's my father at home—he 's a good man, but he 's a man of the world, and reads his classics and his Bible. He 's none the worse for it, I assure you.'

'Where was his son the night of the fog?' said the captain.

'Well, he happened to be out in it.'

'Where 'd he be now but for one o' my men?'

'Who can answer that, Captain Welsh?'

'I can, my lad—stewing in an ante-room of hell-gates, I verily believe.'

Temple sighed at the captain's infatuation, and said,—'I 'll tell you of a fellow at our school named Drew; he was old Rippenger's best theological scholar—always got the prize for theology. Well, he was a confirmed sneak. I 've taken him into a corner and described the torments of dying to him, and his look was disgusting—he broke out in a clammy sweat. "Don't, don't!" he 'd cry. "You 're just the fellow to suffer intensely," I told him. And what was his idea of escaping it? Why, by learning the whole of Deuteronomy and the Acts of the Apostles by heart! His idea of Judgement Day was old Rippenger's half-yearly examination. These are facts, you know, Captain Welsh.'

I testified to them briefly.

The captain said a curious thing: 'I 'll make an appointment with you in leviathan's jaws the night of a storm, my lad.'

'With pleasure,' said Temple.

'The Lord send it!' exclaimed the captain.

His head was bent forward, and he was gazing up into his eyebrows.

Before we knew that anything was coming, he was out on a narrative of a scholar of one of the Universities. Our ears were indifferent to the young man's career from the heights of fortune to delirium tremens down the cataract of brandy, until the captain spoke of a dark night on the Pool of the Thames; and here his voice struggled, and we tried hard to catch the thread of the tale. Two men and a girl were in the boat. The men fought, the girl shrieked, the boat was upset, the three were drowned.

All this came so suddenly that nothing but the captain's heavy thump of his fist on the table kept us from laughing.

He was quite unable to relate the tale, and we had to gather it from his exclamations. One of the men was

mate of a vessel lying in the Pool, having only cast anchor that evening; the girl was his sweetheart; the other man had once been a fine young University gentleman, and had become an outfitter's drunken agent. The brave sailor had nourished him often when on shore, and he, with the fluent tongue which his college had trimmed for him, had led the girl to sin during her lover's absence. Howsoever, they put off together to welcome him on his arrival, never suspecting that their secret had been whispered to Robert Welsh beforehand. Howsoever, Robert gave them hearty greeting, and down to the cabin they went, and there sat drinking up to midnight.

'Three lost souls!' said the captain.

'See how they run,' Temple sang, half audibly, and flushed hot, ashamed of himself.

''Twas I had to bear the news to his mother,' the captain pursued; 'and it was a task, my lads, for I was then little more than your age, and the glass was Robert's only fault, and he was my only brother.'

I offered my hand to the captain. He grasped it powerfully. 'That crew in a boat, and wouldn't you know the devil 'd be coxswain?' he called loudly, and buried his face.

'No,' he said, looking up at us, 'I pray for no storm, but, by the Lord's mercy, for a way to your hearts through fire or water. And now on deck, my lads, while your beds are made up. Three blind things we verily are.'

Captain Welsh showed he was sharp of hearing. His allusion to the humming of the tune of the mice gave Temple a fit of remorse, and he apologized.

'Ay,' said the captain, 'it is so; own it: frivolity 's the fruit of that training that 's all for the flesh. But dip you into some o' my books on my shelves here, and learn to see living man half skeleton, like life and shadow, and never to living man need you pray forgiveness, my lad.'

By sheer force of character he gained the command of our respect. Though we agreed on deck that he had bungled his story, it impressed us; we felt less able to cope with him, and less willing to encounter a storm.

'We shall have one, of course,' Temple said, affecting resignation, with a glance aloft.

I was superstitiously of the same opinion, and praised the vessel.

'Oh, Priscilla 's the very name of a ship that founders with all hands and sends a bottle on shore,' said Temple.

'There isn't a bottle on board,' said I; and this piece of nonsense helped us to sleep off our gloom.

CHAPTER XIV

I MEET OLD FRIENDS

NOTWITHSTANDING the prognostications it pleased us to indulge, we had a tolerably smooth voyage. On a clear cold Sunday morning we were sailing between a foreign river's banks, and Temple and I were alternately reading a chapter out of the Bible to the assembled ship's crew, in advance of the captain's short exhortation. We had ceased to look at ourselves inwardly, and we hardly thought it strange. But our hearts beat for a view of the great merchant city, which was called a free city, and therefore, Temple suggested, must bear certain portions of resemblance to old England; so we made up our minds to like it.

'A wonderful place for beer cellars,' a sailor observed to us slyly, and hitched himself up from the breech to the scalp.

At all events, it was a place where we could buy linen.

For that purpose, Captain Welsh handed us over to the care of his trusted mate Mr. Joseph Double, and we were soon in the streets of the city, desirous of purchasing half their contents. My supply of money was not enough for what I deemed necessary purchases. Temple had split his clothes, mine were tarred; we were appearing at a disadvantage, and we intended to dine at a good hotel and subsequently go to a theatre. Yet I had no wish to part with my watch. Mr. Double said it might be arranged. It was pawned at a shop for a sum equivalent in our money to about twelve pounds, and Temple obliged me by taking charge of the ticket. Thus we were enabled to dress suitably and dine pleasantly, and, as Mr. Double remarked, no one could rob me of my gold watch now. We visited a couple of beer-cellars to taste the drink of the people, and discovered three of our men engaged in a similar undertaking. I proposed that it should be done at my expense. They praised their captain, but asked us, as gentlemen and scholars, whether it was reasonable to object to liquor because your brother was carried out on a high tide? Mr. Double commended them to moderation. Their reply was to estimate an immoderate amount of liquor as due to them, with profound composure.

'Those rascals,' Mr. Double informed us, 'are not in the captain's confidence; they 're tidy seamen, though, and they submit to the captain's laws on board and have their liberty ashore.'

We inquired what the difference was between their privileges and his.

'Why,' said he, 'if they 're so much as accused of a disobedient act, off they 're scurried, and lose fair wages and a kind captain. And let any man Jack of 'em accuse me, and he bounds a indiarubber ball against a wall and gets it; all he meant to give he gets. Once

you fix the confidence of your superior, you 're waterproof.'

We held our peace, but we could have spoken.

Mr. Double had no moral hostility toward theatres. Supposing he did not relish the performance, he could enjoy a spell in the open air, he said, and this he speedily decided to do. Had we not been bound in honour to remain for him to fetch us, we also should have retired from a representation of which we understood only the word *ja*. It was tiresome to be perpetually waiting for the return of this word. We felt somewhat as dogs must feel when human speech is addressed to them. Accordingly, we professed, without concealment, to despise the whole performance. I reminded Temple of a saying of the Emperor Charles v. as to a knowledge of languages.

'Hem!' he went critically; 'it 's all very well for a German to talk in that way, but you can't be five times an Englishman if you 're a foreigner.'

We heard English laughter near us. Presently an English gentleman accosted us.

'Mr. Villiers, I believe?' He bowed at me.

'My name is Richmond.'

He bowed again, with excuses, talked of the Play, and telegraphed to a lady sitting in a box fronting us. I saw that she wrote on a slip of paper; she beckoned; the gentleman quitted us, and soon after placed a twisted note in my hand. It ran:—

'Miss Goodwin (whose Christian name is Clara) wishes very much to know how it has fared with Mr. Harry Richmond since he left Venice.'

I pushed past a number of discontented knees, trying, on my way to her box, to recollect her vividly, but I could barely recollect her at all, until I had sat beside her five minutes. Colonel Goodwin was asleep in a corner

of the box. Awakened by the sound of his native tongue, he recognized me immediately.

'On your way to your father?' he said, as he shook my hand.

I thought it amazing he should guess that in Germany.

'Do you know where he is, sir?' I asked.

'We saw him,' replied the colonel; 'when was it, Clara? A week or ten days ago.'

'Yes,' said Miss Goodwin; 'we will talk of that by-and-by.' And she overflowed with comments on my personal appearance, and plied me with questions, but would answer none of mine.

I fetched Temple into the box to introduce him. We were introduced in turn to Captain Malet, the gentleman who had accosted me below.

'You understand German, then?' said Miss Goodwin.

She stared at hearing that we knew only the word *ja*, for it made our presence in Germany unaccountable.

'The most dangerous word of all,' said Colonel Goodwin, and begged us always to repeat after it the negative *nein* for an antidote.

'You have both seen my father?' I whispered to Miss Goodwin; 'both? We have been separated. Do tell me everything. Don't look at the stage—they speak such nonsense. How did you remember me? How happy I am to have met you! Oh! I haven't forgotten the gondolas and the striped posts, and *stali* and the other word; but soon after we were separated, and I haven't seen him since.'

She touched her father's arm.

'At once, if you like,' said he, jumping up erect.

'In Germany was it?' I persisted.

She nodded gravely and leaned softly on my arm while we marched out of the theatre to her hotel—I in such a state of happiness underlying bewilderment and strong

expectation that I should have cried out loud had not pride in my partner restrained me. At her tea-table I narrated the whole of my adventure backwards to the time of our parting in Venice, hurrying it over as quick as I could, with the breathless termination, 'And now?'

They had an incomprehensible reluctance to perform their part of the implied compact. Miss Goodwin looked at Captain Malet. He took his leave. Then she said, 'How glad I am you have dropped that odious name of Roy! Papa and I have talked of you frequently—latterly very often. I meant to write to you, Harry Richmond. I should have done it the moment we returned to England.'

'You must know,' said the colonel, 'that I am an amateur inspector of fortresses, and my poor Clara has to trudge the Continent with me to pick up the latest inventions in artillery and other matters, for which I get no thanks at head-quarters—but it 's one way of serving one's country when the steel lies rusting. We are now for home by way of Paris. I hope that you and your friend will give us your company. I will see this Captain Welsh of yours before we start. Clara, you decided on dragging me to the theatre to-night with your usual admirable instinct.'

I reminded Miss Goodwin of my father being in Germany.

'Yes, he is at one of the Courts, a long distance from here,' she said, rapidly. 'And you came by accident in a merchant-ship! You are one of those who are marked for extraordinary adventures. Confess: you would have set eyes on me, and not known me. It 's a miracle that I should meet my little friend Harry—little no longer: my friend all the same, are you not?'

I hoped so ardently.

She with great urgency added, 'Then come with us. Prove that you put faith in our friendship.'

In desperation I exclaimed, 'But I must, I must hear of my father.'

She turned to consult the colonel's face.

'Certainly,' he said, and eulogized a loving son. 'Clara will talk to you. I 'm for bed. What was the name of the play we saw this evening? Oh! *Struensee*, to be sure. We missed the scaffold.'

He wished us good-night on an appointment of the hour for breakfast, and ordered beds for us in the hotel.

Miss Goodwin commenced: 'But really I have nothing to tell you, or very little. You know, Papa has introductions everywhere; we are like Continental people, and speak a variety of languages, and I am almost a foreigner, we are so much abroad; but I do think English boys should be educated at home: I hope you 'll go to an English college.'

Noticing my painful look, 'We saw him at the Court of the Prince of Eppenwelzen,' she said, as if her brows ached. 'He is very kindly treated there; he was there some weeks ago. The place lies out in the Hanover direction, far from here. He told us that you were with your grandfather, and I must see Riversley Grange, and the truth is you must take me there. I suspect you have your peace to make; perhaps I shall help you, and be a true Peribanou. We go over Amsterdam, the Hague, Brussels, and you shall see the battlefield, Paris, straight to London. Yes, you are fickle; you have not once called me Peribanou.'

Her voluble rattling succeeded in fencing off my questions before I could exactly shape them, as I staggered from blind to blind idea, now thinking of the sombre red Bench, and now of the German prince's Court.

'Won't you tell me any more to-night?' I said, when she paused.

'Indeed, I have not any more to tell,' she assured me.

It was clear to me that she had joined the mysterious league against my father. I began to have a choking in the throat. I thanked her and wished her good-night while I was still capable of smiling.

At my next interview with Colonel Goodwin he spoke promptly on the subject of my wanderings. I was of an age, he said, to know my own interests. No doubt filial affection was excellent in its way, but in fact it was highly questionable whether my father was still at the Court of this German prince; my father had stated that he meant to visit England to obtain an interview with his son, and I might miss him by a harum-scarum chase over Germany. And besides, was I not offending my grandfather and my aunt, to whom I owed so much? He appealed to my warmest feelings on their behalf. This was just the moment, he said, when there was a turning-point in my fortunes. He could assure me most earnestly that I should do no good by knocking at this prince's doors, and have nothing but bitterness if I did in the end discover my father. 'Surely you understand the advantages of being bred a gentleman?' he wound up. 'Under your grandfather's care you have a career before you, a fine fortune in prospect, everything a young man can wish for. And I must tell you candidly, you run great risk of missing all these things by hunting your father to earth. Give yourself a little time: reflect on it.'

'I have,' I cried. 'I have come out to find him, and I must.'

The colonel renewed his arguments and persuasions until he was worn out. I thanked him continually for his kindness. Clara Goodwin besought me in a surprising manner to accompany her to England, called herself Peribanou, and with that name conjured up my father to my eyes in his breathing form. She said, as her father had done, that I was called on now to decide upon my

future: she had a presentiment that evil would come to me of my unchecked, headstrong will, which she dignified by terming it a true but reckless affection: she believed she had been thrown in my path to prove herself a serviceable friend, a Peribanou of twenty-six who would not expect me to marry her when she had earned my gratitude.

They set Temple on me, and that was very funny. To hear him with his 'I say, Richie, come, perhaps it 's as well to know where a thing should stop; your father knows you 're at Riversley, and he 'll be after you when convenient; and just fancy the squire!' was laughable. He had some anxiety to be home again, or at least at Riversley. I offered him to Miss Goodwin.

She reproached me and coaxed me; she was exceedingly sweet. 'Well,' she said, in an odd, resigned fashion, 'rest a day with us; will you refuse me that?'

I consented; she knew not with what fretfulness. We went out to gaze at the shops and edifices, and I bought two light bags for slinging over the shoulder, two night-shirts, tooth-brushes, and pocket-combs, and a large map of Germany. By dint of vehement entreaties I led her to point to the territory of the Prince of Eppenwelzen-Sarkeld. 'His income is rather less than that of your grandfather, friend Harry,' she remarked. I doated on the spot until I could have dropped my finger on it blindfold.

Two or three pitched battles brought us to a friendly arrangement. The colonel exacted my promise that if I saw my father at Sarkeld in Eppenwelzen I would not stay with him longer than seven days: and that if he was not there I would journey home forthwith. When I had yielded the promise frankly on my honour, he introduced me to a banker of the city, who agreed to furnish me money to carry me on to England in case I should require

it. A diligence engaged to deliver me within a few miles of Sarkeld. I wrote a letter to my aunt Dorothy, telling her facts, and one to the squire, beginning, 'We were caught on our arrival in London by the thickest fog ever remembered,' as if it had been settled on my departure from Riversley that Temple and I were bound for London. Miss Goodwin was my post-bag. She said when we had dined, about two hours before the starting of the diligence, 'Don't you think you ought to go and wish that captain of the vessel you sailed in good-bye?' I fell into her plot so far as to walk down to the quays on the river-side and reconnoitre the ship. But there I saw my prison. I kissed my hand to Captain Welsh's main-mast rather ironically, though not without regard for him. Miss Goodwin lifted her eyelids at our reappearance. As she made no confession of her treason I did not accuse her, and perhaps it was owing to a movement of her conscience that at our parting she drew me to her near enough for a kiss to come of itself.

Four-and-twenty German words of essential service to a traveller in Germany constituted our knowledge of the language, and these were on paper transcribed by Miss Goodwin's own hand. In the gloom of the diligence, packed between Germans of a size that not even Tacitus had prepared me for, smoked over from all sides, it was a fascinating study. Temple and I exchanged the paper half-hourly while the light lasted. When that had fled, nothing was left us to combat the sensation that we were in the depths of a manure-bed, for the windows were closed, the tobacco-smoke thickened, the hides of animals wrapping our immense companions reeked; fire occasionally glowed in their pipe-bowls; they were silent, and gave out smoke and heat incessantly, like inanimate forces of nature. I had most fantastic ideas,—that I had taken root and ripened, and must expect my head to

drop off at any instant: that I was deep down, wedged in the solid mass of the earth. But I need not repeat them: they were accurately translated in imagination from my physical miseries. The dim revival of light, when I had well-nigh ceased to hope for it, showed us all like malefactors imperfectly hanged, or drowned wretches in a cabin under water. I had one Colossus bulging over my shoulder! Temple was blotted out. His face, emerging from beneath a block of curly bearskin, was like that of one frozen in wonderment. Outside there was a melting snow on the higher hills; the clouds over them grew steel-blue. We were going through a valley in a fir-forest.

CHAPTER XV

WE ARE ACCOSTED BY A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE LADY IN THE FOREST

Bowls of hot coffee and milk, with white rolls of bread to dip in them, refreshed us at a forest inn. For some minutes after the meal Temple and I talked like interchangeing puffs of steam, but soon subsided to our staring fit. The pipes were lit again. What we heard sounded like a language of the rocks and caves, and roots plucked up, a language of gluttons feasting; the word *ja* was like a door always on the hinge in every mouth. Dumpy children, bulky men, compressed old women with baked faces, and comical squat dogs, kept the villages partly alive. We observed one young urchin sitting on a stone opposite a dog, and he and the dog took alternate bites off a platter-shaped cake, big enough to require both his hands to hold it. Whether the dog ever snapped more than his share was matter of speculation to us. It was

an education for him in good manners, and when we were sitting at dinner we wished our companions had enjoyed it. They fed with their heads in their plates, splashed and clattered jaws, without paying us any hospitable attention whatever, so that we had the dish of Lazarus. They were perfectly kind, notwithstanding, and allowed a portion of my great map of Germany to lie spread over their knees in the diligence, whilst Temple and I pored along the lines of the rivers. One would thrust his square-nailed finger to the name of a city and pronounce it; one gave us lessons in the expression of the vowels, with the softening of three of them, which seemed like a regulation drill movement for taking an egg into the mouth, and showing repentance of the act. 'Sarkeld,' we exclaimed mutually, and they made a galloping motion of their hands, pointing beyond the hills. Sarkeld was to the right, Sarkeld to the left, as the road wound on. Sarkeld was straight in front of us when the conductor, according to directions he had received, requested us to alight and push through this endless fir-forest up a hilly branch road, and away his hand galloped beyond it, coming to a deep place, and then to grapes, then to a tip-toe station, and under it lay Sarkeld. The pantomime was not bad. We waved our hand to the diligence, and set out cheerfully, with our bags at our backs, entering a gorge in the fir-covered hills before sunset, after starting the proposition—Does the sun himself look foreign in a foreign country?

'Yes, he does,' said Temple; and so I thought, but denied it, for by the sun's favour I hoped to see my father that night, and hail Apollo joyfully in the morning; a hope that grew with exercise of my limbs. Beautiful cascades of dark bright water leaped down the gorge; we chased an invisible animal. Suddenly one of us exclaimed, 'We 're in a German forest'; and we remembered

grim tales of these forests, their awful castles, barons, knights, ladies, long-bearded dwarfs, gnomes and thin people. I commenced a legend off-hand.

'No, no,' said Temple, as if curdling; 'let 's call this place the mouth of Hades. Greek things don't make you feel funny.'

I laughed louder than was necessary, and remarked that I never had cared so much for Greek as on board Captain Welsh's vessel.

'It 's because he was all on the opposite tack I went on quoting,' said Temple. 'I used to read with my father in the holidays, and your Rev. Simon has kept you up to the mark; so it was all fair. It 's not on our consciences that we crammed the captain about our knowledge.'

'No. I 'm glad of it,' said I.

Temple pursued, 'Whatever happens to a fellow, he can meet anything so long as he can say—I 've behaved like a man of honour. And those German tales—they only upset you. You don't see the reason of the thing. Why is a man to be haunted half his life? Well, suppose he did commit a murder. But if he didn't, can't he walk through an old castle without meeting ghosts? or a forest?'

The dusky scenery of a strange land was influencing Temple. It affected me so, I made the worst of it for a cure.

'Fancy those pines saying, "There go two more," Temple. Well; and fancy this—a little earth-dwarf as broad as I 'm long and high as my shoulder. One day he met the loveliest girl in the whole country, and she promised to marry him in twenty years' time, in return for a sack of jewels worth all Germany and half England. You should have seen her dragging it home. People thought it full of charcoal. She married the man

she loved, and the twenty years passed over, and at the stroke of the hour when she first met the dwarf, thousands of bells began ringing through the forest, and her husband cries out, "What is the meaning of it?" and they rode up to a garland of fresh flowers that dropped on her head, and right into a gold ring that closed on her finger, and —look, Temple, look!'

'Where?' asked the dear little fellow, looking in all earnest, from which the gloom of the place may be imagined, for, by suddenly mixing it with my absurd story, I discomposed his air of sovereign indifference as much as one does the surface of a lake by casting a stone in it.

We rounded the rocky corner of the gorge at a slightly accelerated pace in dead silence. It opened out to restorative daylight, and we breathed better and chaffed one another, and, beholding a house with pendent gold grapes, applauded the diligence conductor's expressive pantomime. The opportunity was offered for a draught of wine, but we held water preferable, so we toasted the Priscilla out of the palms of our hands in draughts of water from a rill that had the sound of aspen-leaves, such as I used to listen to in the Riversley meadows, pleasantly familiar.

Several commanding elevations were in sight, some wooded, some bare. We chose the nearest, to observe the sunset, and concurred in thinking it unlike English sunsets, though not so very unlike the sunset we had taken for sunrise on board the Priscilla. A tumbled, dark and light green country of swelling forest-land and slopes of meadow ran to the West, and the West from flaming yellow burned down to smoky crimson across it. Temple bade me 'catch the disc—that was English enough.' A glance at the sun's disc confirmed the truth of his observation. Gazing on the outline of the orb, one

might have fancied oneself in England. Yet the moment it had sunk under the hill this feeling of ours vanished with it. The coloured clouds drew me ages away from the recollection of home.

A tower on a distant hill, white among pines, led us to suppose that Sarkeld must lie somewhere beneath it. We therefore descended straight toward the tower, instead of returning to the road, and struck confidently into a rugged path. Recent events had given me the assurance that in my search for my father I was subject to a special governing direction. I had aimed at the Bench—missed it—been shipped across sea and precipitated into the arms of friends who had seen him and could tell me I was on his actual track, only blindly, and no longer blindly now.

'Follow the path,' I said, when Temple wanted to have a consultation.

'So we did in the London fog!' said he, with some gloom.

But my retort: 'Hasn't it brought us here?' was a silencer.

Dark night came on. Every height stood for a ruin in our eyes, every dip an abyss. It grew bewilderingly dark, but the path did not forsake us, and we expected, at half-hour intervals, to perceive the lights of Sarkeld, soon to be thundering at one of the inns for admission and supper. I could hear Temple rehearsing his German vocabulary, 'Brod, butter, wasser, fleisch, bett,' as we stumbled along. Then it fell to 'Brod, wasser, bett,' and then, 'Bett' by itself, his confession of fatigue. Our path had frequently the nature of a waterway, and was very fatiguing, more agreeable to mount than descend, for in mounting the knees and shins bore the brunt of it, and these sufferers are not such important servants of the footfarer as toes and ankles in danger of tripping and being turned.

I was walking on leveller ground, my head bent and eyes half-shut, when a flash of light in a brook at my feet caused me to look aloft. The tower we had marked after sunset was close above us, shining in a light of torches. We adopted the sensible explanation of this mysterious sight, but were rather in the grip of the superstitious absurd one, until we discerned a number of reddened men.

'Robbers!' exclaimed one of us. Our common thought was, 'No; robbers would never meet on a height in that manner'; and we were emboldened to mount and request their help.

Fronting the tower, which was of white marble, a high tent had been pitched on a green platform semicircled by pines. Torches were stuck in clefts of the trees, or in the fork of the branches, or held by boys and men, and there were clearly men at work beneath the tent at a busy rate. We could hear the paviour's breath escape from them. Outside the ring of torchbearers and others was a long cart with a dozen horses harnessed to it. All the men appeared occupied too much for chatter and laughter. What could be underneath the tent? Seeing a boy occasionally lift one of the flapping corners, we took licence from his example to appease our curiosity. It was the statue of a bronze horse rearing spiritedly. The workmen were engaged fixing its pedestal in the earth.

Our curiosity being satisfied, we held debate upon our immediate prospects. The difficulty of making sure of a bed when you are once detached from your home, was the philosophical reflection we arrived at, for nothing practical presented itself. To arm ourselves we pulled out Miss Goodwin's paper. 'Gasthof is the word!' cried Temple. 'Gasthof, zimmer, bett; that means inn, hot supper, and bed. We 'll ask.' We asked several

of the men. Those in motion shot a stare at us; the torchbearers pointed at the tent and at an unseen height, muttering 'Morgen.' Referring to Miss Goodwin's paper we discovered this to signify the unintelligible word morning, which was no answer at all; but the men, apparently deeming our conduct suspicious, gave us to understand by rather menacing gestures that we were not wanted there, so we passed into the dusk of the trees, angry at their incivility. Had it been Summer we should have dropped and slept. The night air of a sharp season obliged us to keep active, yet we were not willing to get far away from the torches. But after a time they were hidden; then we saw one moving ahead. The holder of it proved to be a workman of the gang, and between us and him the strangest parley ensued. He repeated the word morgen, and we insisted on zimmer and bett.

'He takes us for twin Caspar Hausers,' sighed Temple.

'Nein,' said the man, and, perhaps enlightened by hearing a foreign tongue, beckoned for us to step at his heels.

His lodging was a woodman's hut. He offered us bread to eat, milk to drink, and straw to lie on: we desired nothing more, and were happy, though the bread was black, the milk sour, the straw mouldy.

Our breakfast was like a continuation of supper, but two little girls of our host, whose heads were cased in tight-fitting dirty linen caps, munched the black bread and drank the sour milk so thankfully, while fixing solemn eyes of wonder upon us, that to assure them we were the same sort of creature as themselves we pretended to relish the stuff. Rather to our amazement we did relish it. 'Mutter!' I said to them. They pointed to the room overhead. Temple laid his cheek on his hand. One of the little girls laid hers on the table. I said 'Doctor?' They nodded and answered 'Princess,'

which seemed perfectly good English, and sent our conjectures as to the state of their mother's health astray. I shut a silver English coin in one of their fat little hands.

We now, with the name Sarkeld, craved of their father a direction to that place. At the door of his hut he waved his hand carelessly South for Sarkeld, and vigorously West where the tower stood, then swept both hands up to the tower, bellowed a fire of cannon, waved his hat, and stamped and cheered. Temple, glancing the way of the tower, performed on a trumpet of his joined fists to show we understood that prodigious attractions were presented by the tower; we said *ja* and *ja*, and nevertheless turned into the Sarkeld path.

Some minutes later the sound of hoofs led us to imagine he had despatched a messenger after us. A little lady on a pony, attended by a tawny-faced great square-shouldered groom on a tall horse, rode past, drew up on one side, and awaited our coming. She was dressed in a grey riding-habit and a warm winter-jacket of gleaming grey fur, a soft white boa loose round her neck, crossed at her waist, white gauntlets, and a pretty black felt hat with flowing rim and plume. There she passed as under review. It was a curious scene: the iron-faced great-sized groom on his bony black charger dead still: his mistress, a girl of about eleven or twelve or thirteen, with an arm bowed at her side, whip and reins in one hand, and slips of golden brown hair straying on her flushed cheek; rocks and trees, high silver firs rising behind her, and a slender water that fell from the rocks running at her pony's feet. Half-a-dozen yards were between the charger's head and the pony's flanks. She waited for us to march by, without attempting to conceal that we were the objects of her inspection, and we in good easy swing of the feet gave her a look as we lifted our hats. That look was to me like a net thrown into

moonlighted water: it brought nothing back but broken lights of a miraculous beauty.

Burning to catch an excuse for another look over my shoulder, I heard her voice:

'Young English gentlemen!'

We turned sharp round.

It was she without a doubt who had addressed us: she spurred her pony to meet us, stopped him, and said with the sweetest painful attempt at accuracy in pronouncing a foreign tongue:—

'I sthink you go a wrong way?'

Our hats flew off again, and bareheaded, I seized the reply before Temple could speak.

'Is not this, may I ask you, the way to Sarkeld?'

She gathered up her knowledge of English deliberately.

'Yes, one goes to Sarkeld by sthis way here, but to-day goes everybody up to our Bella Vista, and I entreat you do not miss it, for it is some-s-thing to write to your home of.'

'Up at the tower, then? Oh, we were there last night, and saw the bronze horse, mademoiselle.'

'Yes, I know. I called on my poor sick woman in a hut where you fell asleep, sirs. Her little ones are my lambs; she has been of our household; she is good; and they said, two young, strange, small gentlemen have gone for Sarkeld; and I supposed, sthey cannot know all go to our Bella Vista to-day.'

'You knew at once we were English, mademoiselle?'

'Yes, I could read it off your backs, and truly too your English eyes are quite open at a glance. It is of you both I speak. If I but make my words plain! My "th" I cannot always. And to understand, your English is indeed heavy speech! not so in books. I have my English governess. We read English tales, English poetry—and sthat is your excellence. And so, will you

not come, sirs, up when a way is to be shown to you? It is my question.'

Temple thanked her for the kindness of the offer.

I was hesitating, half conscious of surprise that I should ever be hesitating in doubt of taking the direction toward my father. Hearing Temple's boldness I thanked her also, and accepted. Then she said, bowing:—

'I beg you will cover your heads.'

We passed the huge groom bolt upright on his towering horse; he raised two fingers to the level of his eyebrows in the form of a salute.

Temple murmured: 'I shouldn't mind entering the German Army,' just as after our interview with Captain Bulsted he had wished to enter the British Navy.

This was no more than a sign that he was highly pleased. For my part delight fluttered the words in my mouth, so that I had to repeat half I uttered to the attentive ears of our gracious new friend and guide:—

'Ah,' she said, 'one does sthink one knows almost all before experiment. I am ashamed, yet I will talk, for is it not so? experiment is a school. And you, if you please, will speak slow. For I say of you English gentlemen, silk you spin from your lips; it is not as a language of an alphabet; it is pleasant to hear when one would lull, but Italian can do that, and do it more—am I right?—soft?'

'Bella Vista, lovely view,' said I.

'Lovely view,' she repeated.

She ran on in the most musical tongue, to my thinking, ever heard:—

'And see my little pensioners' poor cottage, who are out up to Lovely View. Miles round go the people to it. Good, and I will tell you strangers:—sthe Prince von Eppenwelzen had his great ancestor, and his sister Markgräfin von Rippau said, "Erect a statue of him,

for he was a great warrior." He could not, or he would not, we know not. So she said, "I will," she said, "I will do it in seven days." She does constantly amuse him, everybody at de Court. Immense excitement! For suppose it!—a statue of a warrior on horseback, in perfect likeness, chapeau tricorne, perruque, all of bronze, and his marshal's bâton. Eh bien, well, a bronze horse is come at a gallop from Berlin; sthat we know. By fortune a most exalted sculptor in Berlin has him ready, —and many horses pulled him to here, to Lovely View, by post-haste; sthat we know. But we are in extremity of puzzlement. For where is the statue to ride him? where—am I plain to you, sirs?—is sthe Marshal Fürst von Eppenwelzen, our great ancestor? Yet the Markgräfin says, "It is right, wait!" She nods, she smiles. Our Court is all at de lake-palace odder side sthe tower, and it is bets of gems, of feathers, of lace, not to be numbered! The Markgräfin says—sthere to-day you see him, Albrecht Wohlgemuth Fürst von Eppenwelzen! But no sculptor can have cast him in bronze—not copied him and cast him in a time of seven days! And we say sthis:—Has she given a secret order to a sculptor—you understand me, sirs, commission—where, how, has he sthe likeness copied? Or did he come to our speisesaal of our lake-palace disguised? Oh! but to see, to copy, to model, to cast in bronze, to travel betwixt Berlin and Sarkeld in a time of seven days? No! so—oh! we guess, we guess, we are in exhaustion. And to-day is like an eagle we have sent an arrow to shoot and know not if he will come down. For shall we see our ancestor on horseback? It will be a not-scribable joy! Or not? So we guess, we are worried. At near eleven o'clock a cannon fires, sthe tent is lifted, and we see; but I am impatient wid my breaths for de gun to go.'

I said it would be a fine sight.

'For strangers, yes; you should be of de palace to know what a fine sight! sthe finest! And you are for Sarkeld? You have friends in Sarkeld?'

'My father is in Sarkeld, mademoiselle. I am told he is at the palace.'

'Indeed; and he is English, your fater?'

'Yes. I have not seen him for years; I have come to find him.'

'Indeed; it is for love of him, your fater, sir, you come, and not speak German?'

I signified that it was so.

She stroked her pony's neck musing.

'Because, of love is not much in de family in England, it is said,' she remarked very shyly, and in recovering her self-possession asked the name of my father.

'His name, mademoiselle, is Mr. Richmond.'

'Mr. Richmond?'

'Mr. Richmond Roy.'

She sprang in her saddle.

'You are son to Mr. Richmond Roy? Oh! it is wonderful.'

'Mademoiselle, then you have seen him lately?'

'Yes, yes! I have seen him. I have heard of his beautiful child, his son; and you it is?'

She studied my countenance a moment.

'Tell me, is he well?' mademoiselle, is he quite well?'

'Oh, yes,' she answered, and broke into smiles of merriment, and then seemed to bite her underlip. 'He is our fun-maker. He must always be well. I owe to him some of my English. You are his son? you were for Sarkeld? You will see him up at our Bella Vista. Quick, let us run.'

She put her pony to a canter up the brown path between the fir-trees, crying that she should take our breath; but we were tight runners, and I, though my heart beat

wildly, was full of fire to reach the tower on the height; so when she slackened her pace, finding us close on her pony's hoofs, she laughed and called us brave boys. Temple's being no more than my friend, who had made the expedition with me out of friendship, surprised her. Not that she would not have expected it to be done by Germans; further she was unable to explain her astonishment.

At a turning of the ascent she pointed her whip at the dark knots and lines of the multitude mounting by various paths to behold the ceremony of unveiling the monument.

I besought her to waste no time.

'You must, if you please, attend my pleasure, if I guide you,' she said, tossing her chin.

'I thank you, I can't tell you how much, mademoiselle,' said I.

She answered: 'You were kind to my two pet lambs, sir.'

So we moved forward.

CHAPTER XVI

THE STATUE ON THE PROMONTORY

The little lady was soon bowing to respectful salutations from crowds of rustics and others on a broad carriage-way circling level with the height. I could not help thinking how doubly foreign I was to all the world here—I who was about to set eyes on my lost living father, while these people were tip-toe to gaze on a statue. But as my father might also be taking an interest in the statue, I got myself round to a moderate sentiment of curiosity and a partial share of the general excitement. Temple

and mademoiselle did most of the conversation, which related to glimpses of scenery, pine, oak, beech-wood, and lake-water, until we gained the plateau where the tower stood, when the giant groom trotted to the front, and worked a clear way for us through a mass of travelling sight-seers, and she leaned to me, talking quite inaudibly amid the laughter and chatting. A band of wind instruments burst out. 'This is glorious!' I conceived Temple to cry like an open-mouthed mute. I found it inspiriting.

The rush of pride and pleasure produced by the music was irresistible. We marched past the tower, all of us, I am sure, with splendid feelings. A stone's throw beyond it was the lofty tent; over it drooped a flag, and flags were on poles round a wide ring of rope guarded by foresters and gendarmes, mounted and afoot. The band, dressed in green, with black plumes to their hats, played in the middle of the ring. Outside were carriages, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback, full of animation; rustics, foresters, town and village people, men, women, and children, pressed against the ropes. It was a day of rays of sunshine, now from off one edge, now from another of large slow clouds, so that at times we and the tower were in a blaze; next the lake-palace was illuminated, or the long grey lake and the woods of pine and of bare brown twigs making bays in it.

Several hands beckoned on our coming in sight of the carriages. 'There he is, then!' I thought; and it was like swallowing my heart in one solid lump. Mademoiselle had free space to trot ahead of us. We saw a tall-sitting lady, attired in sables, raise a finger to her, and nip her chin. Away the little lady flew to a second carriage, and on again, as one may when alive with an inquiry. I observed to Temple, 'I wonder whether she says in her German, "It is my question"; do you

remember?' There was no weight whatever in what I said or thought.

She rode back, exclaiming, 'Nowhere. He is nowhere, and nobody knows. He will arrive. But he is not yet. Now,' she bent coaxingly down to me, 'can you not a few words of German? Only a smallest sum! It is the Markgräfin, my good aunt, would speak wid you, and she can no English—only she is eager to behold you, and come! You will know, for my sake, some scrap of German—*ja?* You will—*nicht wahr?* Or French? Make your plom-pudding of it, will you?'

I made a shocking plum-pudding of it. Temple was no happier.

The margravine, a fine vigorous lady with a lively mouth and livelier eyes of a restless grey that rarely dwelt on you when she spoke, and constantly started off on a new idea, did me the honour to examine me, much as if I had offered myself for service in her corps of grenadiers, and might do in time, but was decreed to be temporarily wanting in manly proportions.

She smiled a form of excuse of my bungling half-English horrid French, talked over me and at me, forgot me, and recollected me, all within a minute, and fished poor Temple for intelligible replies to incomprehensible language in the same manner, then threw her head back to gather the pair of us in her sight, then eyed me alone.

'C'est peut-être le fils de son petit papa, et c'est tout dire.'

Such was her summary comment.

But not satisfied with that, she leaned out of the carriage, and, making an extraordinary grimace appear the mother in labour of the difficult words, said,—'Doos yo' laff?'

There was no helping it: I laughed like a madman, giving one outburst and a dead stop.

Far from looking displeased, she nodded. I was again put to the dreadful test.

'Can yo' mak' laff?'

It spurred my wits. I had no speech to 'mak' laff' with. At the very instant of my dilemma I chanced to see a soberly-clad old townsman hustled between two helpless women of the crowd, his pipe in his mouth, and his hat, wig, and handkerchief sliding over his face, showing his bald crown, and he not daring to cry out, for fear his pipe should be trodden under foot.

'*He* can, your Highness.'

Her quick eyes caught the absurd scene. She turned to one of her ladies and touched her forehead. Her hand was reached out to me; Temple she patted on the shoulder.

'He can—*ja: du auch.*'

A grand gentleman rode up. They whispered, gazed at the tent, and appeared to speak vehemently. All the men's faces were foreign: none of them had the slightest resemblance to my father's. I fancied I might detect him disguised. I stared vainly. Temple, to judge by the expression of his features, was thinking. Yes, thought I, we might as well be at home at old Riversley, that distant spot! We 're as out of place here as frogs in the desert!

Riding to and fro, and chattering, and commotion, of which the margravine was the centre, went on, and the band played beautiful waltzes. The workmen in and out of the tent were full of their business, like seamen under a storm.

'Fräulein Sibley,' the margravine called.

I hoped it might be an English name. So it proved to be; and the delight of hearing English spoken, and, what was more, having English ears to speak to, was blissful as the leap to daylight out of a nightmare.

'I have the honour to be your countrywoman,' said a lady, English all over to our struggling senses.

We became immediately attached to her as a pair of shipwrecked boats lacking provender of every sort are taken in tow by a well-stored vessel. She knew my father, knew him intimately. I related all I had to tell, and we learnt that we had made acquaintance with her pupil, the Princess Ottilia Wilhelmina Frederika Hedwig, only child of the Prince of Eppenwelzen.

'Your father will certainly be here; he is generally the margravine's right hand, and it 's wonderful the margravine can do without him so long,' said Miss Sibley, and conversed with the margravine; after which she informed me that she had been graciously directed to assure me my father would be on the field when the cannon sounded.

'Perhaps you know nothing of Court life?' she resumed. 'We have very curious performances in Sarkeld, and we owe it to the margravine that we are frequently enlivened. You see the tall gentleman who is riding away from her. I mean the one with the black hussar jacket and thick brown moustache. That is the prince. Do you not think him handsome? He is very kind—rather capricious; but that is a way with princes. Indeed, I have no reason to complain. He has lost his wife, the Princess Frederika, and depends upon his sister the margravine for amusement. He has had it since she discovered your papa.'

'Is the gun never going off?' I groaned.

'If they would only conduct their ceremonies without their guns!' exclaimed Miss Sibley. 'The origin of the present ceremony is this: the margravine wished to have a statue erected to an ancestor, a renowned soldier—and I would infinitely prefer talking of England. But never mind. Oh, you won't understand what you gaze at.

Well, the prince did not care to expend the money. Instead of urging that as the ground of his refusal, he declared there were no sculptors to do justice to Prince Albrecht Wohlgemuth, and one could not rely on their effecting a likeness. We have him in the dining-hall; he was strikingly handsome. Afterward he pretended—I 'm speaking now of the existing Prince Ernest —that it would be ages before the statue was completed. One day the margravine induced him to agree to pay the sum stipulated for by the sculptor, on condition of the statue being completed for public inspection within eight days of the hour of their agreement. The whole Court was witness to it. They arranged for the statue, horse and man, to be exhibited for a quarter of an hour. Of course, the margravine did not signify it would be a perfectly finished work. We are kept at a great distance, that we may not scrutinize it too closely. They unveil it to show she has been as good as her word, and then cover it up to fix the rider to the horse,—a screw is employed, I imagine. For one thing we know about it, we know that the horse and the horseman travelled hither separately. In all probability, the margravine gave the order for the statue last autumn in Berlin. Now look at the prince. He has his eye on you. Look down. Now he has forgotten you. He is impatient to behold the statue. Our chief fear is that the statue will not maintain its balance. Fortunately, we have plenty of guards to keep the people from pushing against it. If all turns out well, I shall really say the margravine has done wonders. She does not look anxious; but then she is not one ever to show it. The prince does. Every other minute he is glancing at the tent and at his watch. Can you guess my idea? Your father's absence leads me to think—oh! only a passing glimmer of an idea—the statue has not arrived, and he is bringing it on. Other-

wise, he would be sure to be here. The margravine beckons me.'

'Don't go!' we cried simultaneously.

The Princess Ottilia supplied her place.

'I have sent to our stables for two little pretty Hungarian horses for you two to ride,' she said. 'No, I have not yet seen him. He is asked for, and de Markgräfin knows not at all. He bades in our lake; he has been seen since. The man is exciteable; but he is so sensible. Oh, no. And he is full of laughter. We shall soon see him. Would he not ever be cautious of himself for a son like you?'

Her compliment raised a blush on me.

The patience of the people was creditable to their phlegm. The smoke of pipes curling over the numberless heads was the most stirring thing about them.

Temple observed to me,—

'We 'll give the old statue a British cheer, won't we, Richie?'

'After coming all the way from England!' said I, in dejection.

'No, no, Richie; you 're sure of him now. He 's somewhere directing affairs, I suspect. I say, do let us show them we can ring out the right tune upon occasion. By jingo! there goes a fellow with a match.'

We saw the cannonier march up to the margravine's carriage for orders. She summoned the prince to her side. Ladies in a dozen carriages were standing up, handkerchief in hand, and the gentlemen got their horses' heads on a line. Temple counted nearly sixty persons of quality stationed there. The workmen were trooping out of the tent.

Miss Sibley ran to us, saying,—

'The gun-horror has been commanded. Now then:

the prince can scarcely contain himself. The gunner is ready near his gun; he has his frightful match lifted. See, the manager-superintendent is receiving the margravine's last injunctions. How firm women's nerves are! Now the margravine insists on the prince's reading the exact time by her watch. Everybody is doing it. Let us see. By my watch it is all but fifteen minutes to eleven, A.M. Dearest,' she addressed the little princess; 'would you not like to hold my hand until the gun is fired?'

'Dearest,' replied the princess, whether in childish earnest or irony I could not divine, 'if I would hold a hand it would be a gentleman's.'

All eyes were on the Prince of Eppenwelzen, as he gazed toward the covered statue. With imposing deliberation his hand rose to his hat. We saw the hat raised. The cannon was fired and roared; the band struck up a pompous slow march: and the tent-veil broke apart and rolled off. It was like the dawn flying and sunrise mounting.

I confess I forgot all thought of my father for awhile; the shouts of the people, the braying of the brass instruments, the ladies cheering sweetly, the gentlemen giving short, hearty expressions of applause, intoxicated me. And the statue was superb—horse and rider in new bronze polished by sunlight.

'It is life-like! it is really noble! it is a true Prince!' exclaimed Miss Sibley. She translated several exclamations of the ladies and gentlemen in German: they were entirely to the same effect. The horse gave us a gleam of his neck as he pawed a forefoot, just reined in. We knew him; he was a gallant horse; but it was the figure of the Prince Albrecht that was so fine. I had always laughed at sculptured figures on horseback. This one overawed me. The Marshal was acknowledging

the salute of his army after a famous victory over the infidel Turks. He sat upright, almost imperceptibly but effectively bending his head in harmony with the curve of his horse's neck, and his baton swept the air low in proud submission to the honours cast on him by his acclaiming soldiery. His three-cornered lace hat, curled wig, heavy-trimmed surcoat, and high boots, reminded me of Prince Eugene. No Prince Eugene—nay, nor Marlborough, had such a martial figure, such an animated high old warrior's visage. The bronze features reeked of battle.

Temple and I felt humiliated (without cause, I granted) at the success of a work of Art that struck us as a new military triumph of these Germans, and it was impossible not to admire it. The little Princess Ottilia clapped hands by fits. What words she addressed to me I know not. I dealt out my stock of German—'*Ja, ja*'—to her English. We were drawn by her to congratulate the margravine, whose hand was then being kissed by the prince: he did it most courteously and affectionately. Other gentlemen, counts and barons, bowed over her hand. Ladies, according to their rank and privileges, saluted her on the cheek or in some graceful fashion. When our turn arrived, Miss Sibley translated for us, and as we were at concert pitch we did not acquit ourselves badly. Temple's remark was, that he wished she and all her family had been English. Nothing was left for me to say but that the margravine almost made us wish we had been German.

Smiling cordially, the margravine spoke, Miss Sibley translated:—

'Her Royal Highness asks you if you have seen your father?'

I shook my head.

The Princess Ottilia translated,—

'Her Highness, my good aunt, would know, would you know him, did you see him?'

'Yes, anywhere,' I cried.

The margravine pushed me back with a gesture.

'Yes, your Highness, on my honour; anywhere on earth!'

She declined to hear the translation.

Her insulting disbelief in my ability to recognize the father I had come so far to embrace would have vexed me but for the wretched thought that I was losing him again. We threaded the carriages; gazed at the horsemen in a way to pierce the hair on their faces. The little princess came on us hurriedly.

'Here, see, are the horses. I will you to mount. Are they not pretty animals?' She whispered, 'I believe your fater have been hurt in his mind by something. It is only perhaps. Now mount, for de Markgräfin says you are our good guests.'

We mounted simply to show that we could mount, for we would rather have been on foot, and drew up close to the right of the margravine's carriage.

'Hush! a poet is reading his ode,' said the princess. 'It is Count Fretzel von Wolfenstein.'

This ode was dreadful to us, and all the Court people pretended they liked it. When he waved his right hand toward the statue there was a shout from the rustic set; when he bowed to the margravine, the ladies and gentlemen murmured agreeably and smiled. We were convinced of its being downright hypocrisy, rustic stupidity, Court flattery. We would have argued our case, too. I proposed a gallop; Temple said,—

'No, we 'll give the old statue our cheer as soon as this awful fellow has done. I don't care much for poetry, but don't let me ever have to stand and hear German poetry again for the remainder of my life.'

We could not imagine why they should have poetry read out to them instead of their fine band playing, but supposed it was for the satisfaction of the margravine, with whom I grew particularly annoyed on hearing Miss Sibley say she conceived her Highness to mean that my father was actually on the ground, and that we neither of us, father and son, knew one another. I swore on my honour, on my life, he was not present; and the melancholy in my heart taking the form of extreme irritation, I spoke passionately. I rose in my stirrups, ready to shout, 'Father! here 's Harry Richmond come to see you. Where are you!' I did utter something—a syllable or two: 'Make haste!' I think the words were. They sprang from my inmost bosom, addressed without forethought to that drawling mouthing poet. The margravine's face met mine like a challenge. She had her lips tight in a mere lip-smile, and her eyes gleamed with provocation.

'Her Highness,' Miss Sibley translated, 'asks whether you are prepared to bet that your father is *not* on the ground?'

'Beg her to wait two minutes, and I 'll be prepared to bet any sum,' said I.

Temple took one half the circle, I the other, riding through the attentive horsemen and carriage-lines, and making sure the face we sought was absent, more or less discomposing everybody. The poet finished his ode; he was cheered, of course. Mightily relieved, I beheld the band resuming their instruments, for the cheering resembled a senseless beating on brass shields. I felt that we English could do it better. Temple from across the sector of the circle, running about two feet in front of the statue, called aloud,—

'Richie! he 's not here!'

'Not here!' cried I.

The people gazed up at us, wondering at the tongue we talked.

'Richie! now let 's lead these fellows off with a tip-top cheer!'

Little Temple crowed lustily.

The head of the statue turned from Temple to me.

I found the people falling back with amazed exclamations. I—so prepossessed was I—simply stared at the sudden-flashing white of the statue's eyes. The eyes, from being an instant ago dull carved balls, were animated. They were fixed on me. I was unable to give out a breath. Its chest heaved; both bronze hands struck against the bosom.

'Richmond! my son! Richie! Harry Richmond! Richmond Roy!'

That was what the statue gave forth.

My head was like a ringing pan. I knew it was my father, but my father with death and strangeness, earth, metal, about him; and his voice was like a human cry contending with earth and metal—mine was stifled. I saw him descend. I dismounted. We met at the ropes and embraced. All his figure was stiff, smooth, cold. My arms slid on him. Each time he spoke I thought it an unnatural thing: I myself had not spoken once.

After glancing by hazard at the empty saddle of the bronze horse, I called to mind more clearly the appalling circumstance which had stupefied the whole crowd. They had heard a statue speak—had seen a figure of bronze walk. For them it was the ancestor of their prince; it was the famous dead old warrior of a hundred and seventy years ago set thus in motion. Imagine the behaviour of people round a slain tiger that does not compel them to fly, and may yet stretch out a dreadful paw! Much so they pressed for a nearer sight of its

walnut visage, and shrank in the act. Perhaps I shared some of their sensations. I cannot tell: my sensations were tranced. There was no warmth to revive me in the gauntlet I clasped. I looked up at the sky, thinking that it had fallen dark.

CHAPTER XVII

MY FATHER BREATHES, MOVES, AND SPEAKS

The people broke away from us like furrowed water as we advanced on each side of the ropes toward the margravine's carriage.

I became a perfectly mechanical creature: incapable of observing, just capable of taking an impression here and there; and in such cases the impressions that come are stamped on hot wax; they keep the scene fresh; they partly pervert it as well. Temple's version is, I am sure, the truer historical picture. He, however, could never repeat it twice exactly alike, whereas I failed not to render image for image in clear succession as they had struck me at the time. I could perceive that the figure of the Prince Albrecht, in its stiff condition, was debarred from vaulting, or striding, or stooping, so that the ropes were a barrier between us. I saw the little Princess Ottilia eyeing us with an absorbed comprehensive air quite unlike the manner of a child. Dots of heads, curious faces, peering and starting eyes, met my vision. I heard sharp talk in German, and a rider flung his arm, as if he wished to crash the universe, and flew off. The margravine seemed to me more an implacable parrot than a noble lady. I thought to myself: This is my father, and I am not overjoyed or grateful. In the same way, I felt that the daylight was bronze, and I did not wonder at it: nay, I

reasoned on the probability of a composition of sun and mould producing that colour. The truth was, the powers of my heart and will were frozen; I thought and felt at random. And I crave excuses for dwelling on such trifling phenomena of the sensations, which have been useful to me by helping me to realize the scene, even as at the time they obscured it.

According to Temple's description, when the statue moved its head toward him, a shudder went through the crowd, and a number of forefingers were levelled at it, and the head moved toward me, marked of them all. Its voice was answered by a dull puling scream from women, and the men gaped. When it descended from the saddle, the act was not performed with one bound, as I fancied, but difficultly; and it walked up to me like a figure dragging logs at its heels. Half-a-dozen workmen ran to arrest it; some townswomen fainted. There was a heavy altercation in German between the statue and the superintendent of the arrangements. The sun shone brilliantly on our march to the line of carriages where the Prince of Eppenwelzen was talking to the margravine in a fury, and he dashed away on his horse, after bellowing certain directions to his foresters and the workmen, by whom we were surrounded; while the margravine talked loudly and amiably, as though everything had gone well. Her watch was out. She acknowledged my father's bow, and overlooked him. She seemed to have made her courtiers smile. The ladies and gentlemen obeyed the wave of her hand by quitting the ground; the band headed a long line of the commoner sort, and a body of foresters gathered the remnants and joined them to the rear of the procession. A liveried groom led away Temple's horse and mine. Temple declared he could not sit after seeing the statue descend from its pedestal.

Her Highness's behaviour roughened as soon as the place was clear of company. She spoke at my father impetuously, with manifest scorn and reproach, struck her silver-mounted stick on the carriage panels, again and again stamped her foot, lifting a most variable emphatic countenance. Princess Ottilia tried to intercede. The margravine clenched her hands, and, to one not understanding her speech, appeared literally to blow the little lady off with the breath of her mouth. Her whole bearing consisted of volleys of abuse, closed by magisterial interrogations. Temple compared her Highness's language to the running out of Captain Welsh's chain-cable, and my father's replies to the hauling in: his sentences were short, they sounded like manful protestations; I barely noticed them. Temple's version of it went: 'And there was your father apologizing, and the margravine rating him,' etc. My father, as it happened, was careful not to open his lips wide on account of the plaster, or thick coating of paint on his face. No one would have supposed that he was burning with indignation; the fact being, that to give vent to it, he would have had to exercise his muscular strength; he was plastered and painted from head to foot. The fixture of his wig and hat, too, constrained his skin, so that his looks were no index of his feelings. I longed gloomily for the moment to come when he would present himself to me in his natural form. He was not sensible of the touch of my hand, nor I of his. There we had to stand until the voluble portion of the margravine's anger came to an end. She shut her eyes and bowed curtly to our salute.

'You have seen the last of me, madam,' my father said to her whirling carriage-wheels.

He tried to shake, and strained in his ponderous garments. Temple gazed abashed. I knew not how

to act. My father kept lifting his knees on the spot as if practising a walk.

The tent was in its old place covering the bronze horse. A workman stepped ahead of us, and we all went at a strange leisurely pace down the hill through tall pine-trees to where a closed vehicle awaited us. Here were also a couple of lackeys, who deposited my father on a bed of moss, and with much effort pulled his huge boots off, leaving him in red silk stockings. Temple and I snatched his gauntlets; Temple fell backward, but we had no thought of laughter; people were seen approaching, and the three of us jumped into the carriage. I had my father's living hand in mine to squeeze; feeling him scarcely yet the living man I had sought, and with no great warmth of feeling. His hand was very moist. Often I said, 'Dear father!—Papa, I 'm so glad at last,' in answer to his short-breathed 'Richie, my little lad, my son Richmond! You found me out; you found me!' We were conscious that his thick case of varnished clothing was against us. One would have fancied from his way of speaking that he suffered from asthma. I was now gifted with a tenfold power of observation, and let nothing escape me.

Temple, sitting opposite, grinned cheerfully at times to encourage our spirits; he had not recovered from his wonderment, nor had I introduced him. My father, however, had caught his name. Temple (who might as well have talked, I thought) was perpetually stealing secret glances of abstracted perusal at him with a pair of round infant's eyes, sucking his reflections the while. My father broke our silence.

'Mr. Temple, I have the honour,' he said, as if about to cough; 'the honour of making your acquaintance; I fear you must surrender the hope of making mine at present.'

Temple started and reddened like a little fellow detected in straying from his spelling-book, which was the window-frame. In a minute or so the fascination proved too strong for him; his eyes wandered from the window and he renewed his shy inspection bit by bit as if casting up a column of figures.

'Yes, Mr. Temple, we are in high Germany,' said my father.

It must have cost Temple cruel pain, for he was a thoroughly gentlemanly boy, and he could not resist it. Finally he surprised himself in his stealthy reckoning: arrived at the full-breech or buttoned waistband, about half-way up his ascent from the red silk stocking, he would pause and blink rapidly, sometimes jump and cough.

To put him at his ease, my father exclaimed, 'As to this exterior,' he knocked his knuckles on the heaving hard surface, 'I can only affirm that it was, on horseback —ahem!—particularly as the horse betrayed no restivity, pronounced perfect! The sole complaint of our interior concerns the resemblance we bear to a lobster. Human somewhere, I do believe myself to be. I shall have to be relieved of my shell before I can at all satisfactorily proclaim the fact. I am a human being, believe me.'

He begged permission to take breath a minute.

'I know you for my son's friend, Mr. Temple: here is my son, my boy, Harry Lepel Richmond Roy. Have patience: I shall presently stand unshelled. I have much to relate; you likewise have your narrative in store. That you should have lit on me at the critical instant is one of those miracles which combine to produce overwhelming testimony—ay, Richie! without a doubt there is a hand directing our destiny.' His speaking in such a strain, out of pure kindness to Temple, huskily, with his painful attempt to talk like himself, revived his image

as the father of my heart and dreams, and stirred my torpid affection, though it was still torpid enough, as may be imagined, when I state that I remained plunged in contemplation of his stocking of red silk emerging from the full bronzed breech, considering whether his comparison of himself to a shell-fish might not be a really just one. We neither of us regained our true natures until he was free of every vestige of the garb of Prince Albrecht Wohlgemuth. Attendants were awaiting him at the garden-gate of a beautiful villa partly girdled by rising fir-woods on its footing of bright green meadow. They led him away, and us to bath-rooms.

CHAPTER XVIII

WE PASS A DELIGHTFUL EVENING, AND I HAVE A MORNING VISION

In a long saloon ornamented with stags' horns and instruments of the chase, tusks of boars, spear-staves, boar-knives, and silver horns, my father, I, and Temple sat down to a memorable breakfast, my father in his true form, dressed in black silken jacket and knee-breeches, purple-stockings and pumps; without a wig, I thanked heaven to see. How blithely he flung out his limbs and heaved his chest released from confinement! His face was stained brownish, but we drank old Rhine wine, and had no eye for appearances.

'So you could bear it no longer, Richie?' My father interrupted the narrative I doled out, anxious for his, and he began, and I interrupted him.

'You did think of me often, papa, didn't you?'

His eyes brimmed with tenderness.

'Think of you!' he sighed.

I gave him the account of my latest adventures in a few panting breaths, suppressing the Bench. He set my face to front him.

'We are two fools, Mr. Temple,' he said.

'No, sir,' said Temple.

'Now you speak, papa,' said I.

He smiled warmly.

'Richie begins to remember me.'

I gazed at him to show it was true.

'I do, papa—I 'm not beginning to.'

At his request, I finished the tale of my life at school.

'Ah, well! that was bad fortune; this is good!' he exclaimed. ''Tis your father, my son: 'tis day-light, though you look at it through a bed-curtain, and think you are half-dreaming. Now then for me, Richie.'

My father went on in this wise excitedly:

'I was laying the foundation of your fortune here, my boy. Heavens! when I was in that bronze shell I was astonished only at my continence in not bursting. You have grown,—you have shot up and filled out. I register my thanks to your grandfather Beltham;—the same, in a minor degree, to Captain Jasper Welsh. Between that man Rippenger and me there shall be dealings. He flogged you: let that pass. He exposed you to the contempt of your schoolfellows because of a breach in my correspondence with a base-born ferule-swinger. What are we coming to? Richie, my son, I was building a future for you here. And Colonel Goodwin—Colonel Goodwin, you encountered him too, and his marriageable daughter—I owe it to them that I have you here! Well, in the event of my sitting out the period this morning as the presentment of Prince Albrecht, I was to have won something would have astonished that unimpressionable countryman of ours. Goodness

gracious, my boy! when I heard your English shout, it went to my marrow. Could they expect me to look down on my own flesh and blood, on my son—my son Richmond—after a separation of years, and continue a statue? Nay, I followed my paternal impulse. Grant that the show was spoilt, does the Markgräfin insist on my having a bronze *heart* to carry on her pastime? Why, naturally, I deplore a failure, let the cause be what it will. Whose regrets can eclipse those of the principal actor? Quotha! as our old Plays have it. Regrets? Did I not for fifteen minutes and more of mortal time sit in view of a multitude, motionless, I ask you, like a chiselled block of stone,—and the compact was one quarter of an hour, and no farther? That was my stipulation. I told her—I can hold out one quarter of an hour: I pledged myself to it. Who, then, is to blame? I was exposed to view twenty-three minutes, odd seconds. Is there not some ancient story of a monstrous wretch baked in his own bull? My situation was as bad. If I recollect aright, he could roar; no such relief was allowed to me. And I give you my word, Richie, lads both, that while that most infernal Count Fretzel was pouring forth his execrable humdrum, I positively envied the privilege of an old palsied fellow, chief boatman of the forest lake, for, thinks I, hang him! he can nod his head and I can not. Let me assure you, twenty minutes of an ordeal like that,—one posture, mind you, no raising of your eyelids, taking your breath mechanically, and your heart beating—jumping like an enraged ballet-dancer boxed in your bosom—a literal description, upon my honour; and not only jumping, jumping every now and then, I may say, with a toe in your throat:—I was half-choked:—well, I say, twenty minutes, twenty-seven minutes and a half of that, getting on, in fact, to half-an-hour, it is superhuman!—by heavens, it is heroical!

And observe my reward: I have a son—my only one. I have been divided from him for years; I am establishing his fortune; I know he is provided with comforts:—Richie, you remember the woman Waddy? A faithful soul! She obtained my consent at last—previously I had objections; in fact, your address was withheld from the woman—to call at your school. She saw Miss Rippenger, a girl of considerable attractions. She heard you were located at Riversley:—I say, I know the boy is comfortably provided for; but we have been separated since he was a little creature with curls on his forehead, scarce breeched——'

I protested:

'Papa, I have been in jacket and trousers I don't know how long.'

'Let me pursue,' said my father. 'And to show you, Richie, it is a golden age ever when you and I are together, and ever shall be till we lose our manly spirit,—and we cling to that,—till we lose our princely spirit, which we never will abandon—perish rather!—I drink to you, and challenge you; and, mind you, old Hock wine has charms. If Burgundy is the emperor of wines, Hock is the empress. For youngsters, perhaps, I should except the Hock that gets what they would fancy a trifle *piqué*, turned with age, so as to lose in their opinion its empress flavour.'

Temple said modestly: 'I should call that the margravine of wines.'

My father beamed on him with great approving splendour. 'Join us, Mr. Temple; you are a man of wit, and may possibly find this specimen worthy of you. This wine has a history. You are drinking wine with blood in it. Well, I was saying, the darling of my heart has been torn from me; I am in a foreign land; foreign, that is, by birth, and on the whole foreign. Yes!—I

am the cynosure of eyes; I am in a singular posture, a singular situation; I hear a cry in the tongue of my native land, and what I presume is my boy's name: I look, I behold him, I follow a parent's impulse. On my soul! none but a fish-father could have stood against it. Well, for this my reward is—and I should have stepped from a cathedral spire just the same, if I had been mounted on it—that I, I,—and the woman knows all my secret—I have to submit to the foul tirade of a vixen. She drew language, I protest, from the slums. And I entreat you, Mr. Temple, with your "margravine of wines"—which was very neatly said, to be sure—note you this curious point for the confusion of Radicals in your after life; her Highness's pleasure was to lend her tongue to the language—or something like it—of a besotted fish-wife; so! very well, and just as it is the case with that particular old Hock you youngsters would disapprove of, and we cunning oldsters know to contain more virtues in maturity than a nunnery of May-blooming virgins, just so the very faults of a royal lady—royal by birth and in temper a termagant—impart a perfume! a flavour! You must age; you must live in Courts, you must sound the human bosom, rightly to appreciate it. She is a woman of the most malicious fine wit imaginable. She is a generous woman, a magnanimous woman; wear her chains and she will not brain you with her club. She is the light, the centre of every society where she appears, like what shall I say? like the moon in a bowl of old Rhenish. And you will drain that bowl to the bottom to seize her, as it were—catch a correct idea of her; ay, and your brains are drowned in the attempt. Yes, Richie; I was aware of your residence at Riversley. Were you reminded of your wandering dada on Valentine's day? Come, my boy, we have each of us a thousand things to relate. I may be dull—I do not understand

what started you on your journey in search of me. An impulse? An accident? Say, a directing angel! We rest our legs here till evening, and then we sup. You will be astonished to hear that you have dined. 'Tis the fashion with the Germans. I promise you good wine shall make it up to you for the return to school-habits. We sup, and we pack our scanty baggage, and we start to-night. Brook no insult at Courts if you are of material value: if not, it is unreservedly a question whether you like kickings.'

My father paused, yawned and stretched, to be rid of the remainder of his aches and stiffness. Out of a great yawn he said:

'Dear lads, I have fallen into the custom of the country; I crave your permission that I may smoke. Wander, if you choose, within hail of me, or sit by me, if you can bear it, and talk of your school-life, and your studies. Your aunt Dorothy, Richie? She is well? I know not her like. I could bear to hear of any misfortune but that she suffered pain!'

My father smoked his cigar peacefully. He had laid a guitar on his knees, and flipped a string, or chafed over all the strings, and plucked and thrummed them as his mood varied. We chatted, and watched the going down of the sun, and amused ourselves idly, fermenting as we were. Anything that gave pleasure to us two boys pleased and at once occupied my father. It was without aid from Temple's growing admiration of him that I recovered my active belief and vivid delight in his presence. My younger days sprang up beside me like brothers. No one talked, looked, flashed, frowned, beamed, as he did! had such prompt liveliness as he! such tenderness! No one was ever so versatile in playfulness. He took the colour of the spirits of the people about him. His vivacious or sedate man-of-the-world tone shifted to

[illegible] you on your journey in search of me. An [illegible]? An accident? Say, a directing angel! We rest our legs here till evening, and then we sup. You [illegible] with the Germans. I promise you good wine shall [illegible] up to you for the return to school-habits. We [illegible] and we pack our scrip baggage, and we start to-night. Brook no insult of words if you are of material value: if not, it is [illegible] a question whether you like kickings.'

My father paused, [illegible] and [illegible], to be rid of the remainder of his aches and [illegible]. Out of a great yawn he said:

'Dear lads, I have fallen [illegible] bosom of the country; I crave your permission [illegible] may stretch. Wander, if you choose, within hail of me, or sit by me, if you can bear it, and talk of your school-life, and your studies. Your aunt Dorothy, Richie? She is well? I know not her like. I could bear to hear of any mischance but that she suffered pain!'

My father smoked his cigar peacefully. He had laid a [illegible] on his knee and tipped a string, or chafed over all the strings, and [illegible] and thrummed them in [illegible] and [illegible]. We chatted, and [illegible] the going down of the sun, and amused ourselves [illegible] commenting, as we were. Anything [illegible] pleased us, and we [illegible] pleased and at once [illegible] in [illegible] aid from Temple's [illegible] recovered my native belief [illegible] presence. My younger days [illegible] like brothers. No one talked, looked, [illegible] frowned, beamed, as he did! [illegible] was ever so versatile in playfulness. He took the [illegible] of the spirits of the people about him. He [illegible]

"He had laid a guitar on his knees and flipped a string."

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playfellow's fun in a twinkling. I used as a little fellow to think him larger than he really was, but he was of good size, inclined to be stout; his eyes were grey, rather prominent, and his forehead sloped from arched eyebrows. So conversational were his eyes and brows that he could persuade you to imagine he was carrying on a dialogue without opening his mouth. His voice was charmingly clear; his laughter confident, fresh, catching, the outburst of his very self, as laughter should be. Other sounds of laughter were like echoes.

Strange to say, I lost the links of my familiarity with him when he left us on a short visit to his trunks and portmanteaux, and had to lean on Temple, who tickled but rejoiced me by saying: 'Richie, your father is just the one I should like to be secretary to.'

We thought it a pity to have to leave this nice foreign place immediately. I liked the scenery, and the wine, and what I supposed to be the habit of the gentlemen here to dress in silks. On my father's return to us I asked him if we could not stay till morning.

'Till morning, then,' he said: 'and to England with the first lark.'

His complexion was ruddier; his valet had been at work to restore it; he was getting the sanguine hue which coloured my recollection of him. Wearing a black velvet cap and a Spanish furred cloak, he led us over the villa. In Sarkeld he resided at the palace, and generally at the lake-palace on the removal of the Court thither. The margravine had placed the villa, which was her own property, at his disposal, the better to work out their conspiracy.

'It would have been mine!' said my father, bending suddenly to my ear, and humming his philosophical 'heigho,' as he stepped on in minuet fashion. We went through apartments rich with gilded oak and pine

panellings: in one was a rough pattern of a wooden horse opposite a mirror; by no means a figure of a horse, but apparently a number of pieces contributed by a carpenter's workshop, having a rueful seat in the middle. My father had practised the attitude of Prince Albrecht Wohlgemuth on it. 'She timed me five and twenty minutes there only yesterday,' he said; and he now supposed he had sat the bronze horse as a statue in public view exactly thirty-seven minutes and a quarter. Tubs full of colouring liquid to soak the garments of the prince, pots of paint, and paint and plaster brushes, hinted the magnitude of the preparations.

'Here,' said my father in another apartment, 'I was this morning apparelled at seven o'clock: and I would have staked my right arm up to the collar-bone on the success of the undertaking!'

'Weren't they sure to have found it out in the end, papa?' I inquired.

'I am not so certain of that,' he rejoined: 'I cannot quaff consolation from that source. I should have been covered up after exhibition; I should have been pronounced imperfect in my fitting-apparatus; the sculptor would have claimed me, and I should have been enjoying the fruits of a brave and harmless conspiracy to do honour to an illustrious prince, while he would have been moulding and casting an indubitable bronze statue in my image. A fig for rumours! We show ourself; we are caught from sight; we are again on show. Now this being successfully done, do you see, Royalty declines to listen to vulgar tattle. Presumably, Richie, it was suspected by the Court that the margravine had many months ago commanded the statue at her own cost, and had set her mind on winning back the money. The wonder of it was my magnificent resemblance to the defunct. I sat some three hours before the old warrior's

portraits in the dining-saloon of the lake-palace. Accord me one good spell of meditation over a tolerable sketch, I warrant myself to represent him to the life, provided that he was a personage: I incline to stipulate for handsome as well. On my word of honour as a man and a gentleman, I pity the margravine—my poor good Frau Feldmarschall! Now, here, Richie,'—my father opened a side-door out of an elegant little room into a spacious dark place,—'here is her cabinet-theatre, where we act German and French comediettas in Spring and Autumn. I have superintended it during the two or more years of my stay at the Court. Humph! 'tis over.'

He abruptly closed the door. His dress belonged to the part of a Spanish nobleman, personated by him in a Play called *The Hidalgo Enraged*, he said, pointing a thumb over his shoulder at the melancholy door, behind which gay scenes had sparkled.

'Papa!' said I sadly, for consolation.

'You 're change for a sovereign to the amount of four hundred and forty-nine thousand shillings every time you speak!' cried he, kissing my forehead.

He sparkled in good earnest on hearing that I had made acquaintance with the little Princess Ottilia. What I thought of her, how she looked at me, what I said to her, what words she answered, how the acquaintance began, who were observers of it,—I had to repair my omission to mention her by furnishing a precise description of the circumstances, describing her face and style, repeating her pretty English.

My father nodded: he thought I exaggerated that foreign English of hers; but, as I said, I was new to it and noticed it. He admitted the greater keenness of attention awakened by novelty.

'Only,' said he, 'I rather wonder——' and here he smiled at me inquiringly. ''Tis true,' he added, 'a boy

of fourteen or fifteen—ay, Richie, have your fun out. A youngster saw the comic side of her—— Do you know, that child has a remarkable character? Her disposition is totally unfathomable. You are a deep reader of English poetry, I hope; she adores it, and the English Navy. She informed me that if she had been the English people she would have made Nelson king. The Royal family of England might see objections to that, I told her. Cries she: "Oh! anything for a sea-hero." You will find these young princes and princesses astonishingly revolutionary when they entertain brains. Now at present, just at present, an English naval officer, and a poet, stand higher in the esteem of that young Princess Ottilia than dukes, kings, or emperors. So you have seen her!' my father ejaculated musingly, and hummed, and said: 'By the way, we must be careful not to offend our grandpapa Beltham, Richie. Good acres—good anchorage; good coffers—good harbourage. Regarding poetry, my dear boy, you ought to be writing it, for I do—the diversion of leisure hours, impromptus. In poetry, I would scorn anything but impromptus. I was saying, Richie, that if tremendous misfortune withholds from you your legitimate prestige, you must have the substantial element. 'Tis your springboard to vault by, and cushions on the other side if you make a miss and fall. 'Tis the essence if you have not the odour.'

I followed my father's meaning as the shadow of a bird follows it in sunlight; it made no stronger an impression than a flying shadow on the grass; still I could verify subsequently that I had penetrated him—I had caught the outline of his meaning—though I was little accustomed to his manner of communicating his ideas: I had no notion of what he touched on with the words, prestige, essence, and odour.

My efforts to gather the reason for his having left me

neglected at school were fruitless. 'Business, business! sad necessity! hurry, worry—the hounds!' was his nearest approach to an explicit answer; and seeing I grieved his kind eyes, I abstained. Nor did I like to defend Mr. Rippenger for expecting to be paid. We came to that point once or twice, when so sharply wronged did he appear, and vehement and indignant, that I banished thoughts which marred my luxurious contentment in hearing him talk and sing, and behave in his old ways and new habits.

Plain velvet was his dress at dinner. We had a yellow Hock. Temple's meditative face over it, to discover the margravine, or something, in its flavour, was a picture. It was an evening of incessant talking; no telling of events straightforwardly, but all by fits—all here and there. My father talked of Turkey, so I learnt he had been in that country; Temple of the routine of our life at Riversley; I of Kiomi, the gipsy girl; then we two of Captain Jasper Welsh; my father of the Princess Ottilia. When I alluded to the margravine, he had a word to say of Mrs. Waddy; so I learnt she had been in continual correspondence with him, and had cried heavily about me, poor soul. Temple laughed out a recollection of Captain Bulsted's 'hic, hæc, hoc'; I jumped Janet Ilchester up on the table; my father expatiated on the comfort of a volume of Shakespeare to an exiled Englishman. We drank to one another, and heartily to the statue. My father related the history of the margravine's plot in duck-and-drake skips, and backward to his first introduction to her at some Austrian Baths among the mountains. She wanted amusement—he provided it; she never let him quit her sight from that moment.

'And now,' he said, 'she has lost me!' He drew out of his pocket-book a number of designs for the statue of Prince Albrecht, to which the margravine's initials were

appended, and shuffled them, and sighed, and said:—'Most complete arrangements! most complete! No body of men were ever so well drilled as those fellows up at Bella Vista—could not have been! And at the climax, in steps the darling boy for whom I laboured and sweated, and down we topple incontinently! Nothing would have shaken me but the apparition of my son! I was proof against everything but that! I sat invincible for close upon an hour—call it an hour! Not a muscle of me moved: I repeat, the heart in my bosom capered like an independent organ; had it all its own way, leaving me mine, until——Mr. Temple, take my word for it, there is a guiding hand in some families; believe it, and be serene in adversity. The change of life at a merry Court to life in a London alley will exercise our faith. But the essential thing is that Richie has been introduced here, and I intend him to play a part here. The grandson and heir of one of the richest commoners in England—I am not saying commoner as a term of reproach—possessed of a property that turns itself over and doubles itself every ten years, may—mind you, may—on such a solid foundation as that!—and as to birth, your Highness has only to grant us a private interview.'

Temple was dazed by this mystifying address to him; nor could I understand it.

'Why, papa, you always wished for me to go into Parliament,' said I.

'I do,' he replied, 'and I wish you to lead the London great world. Such topics are for by-and-by. Adieu to them!' He kissed his wafting finger-tips.

We fell upon our random talk again with a merry rattle.

I had to give him a specimen of my piano-playing and singing.

He shook his head. 'The cricketer and the scholar

have been developed at the expense of the musician; and music, Richie, music unlocks the chamber of satin-rose.'

Late at night we separated. Temple and I slept in companion-rooms. Deadly drowsy, the dear little fellow sat on the edge of my bed chattering of his wonder. My dreams led me wandering with a ship's diver under the sea, where we walked in a light of pearls and exploded old wrecks. I was assuring the glassy man that it was almost as clear beneath the waves as above, when I awoke to see my father standing over me in daylight; and in an ecstasy I burst into sobs.

'Here, Richie'—he pressed fresh violets on my nostrils —'you have had a morning visitor. Quick out of bed, and you will see the little fairy crossing the meadow.'

I leapt to the window in time to have in view the little Princess Ottilia, followed by her faithful gaunt groom, before she was lost in the shadow of the fir-trees.

CHAPTER XIX

OUR RETURN HOMEWARD

We started for England at noon, much against my secret wishes; but my father would not afford the margravine time to repent of her violent language and injustice toward him. Reflection increased his indignation. Anything that went wrong on the first stages of the journey caused him to recapitulate her epithets and reply to them proudly. He confided to me in Cologne Cathedral that the entire course of his life was a grand plot, resembling an unfinished piece of architecture, which might, at a future day, prove the wonder of the world: and he had,

therefore, packed two dozen of hoar old (*uralt*: he used comical German) Hock for a present to my grandfather Beltham, in the hope of its being found acceptable.

'For, Richie,' said he, 'you may not know—and it is not to win your thanks I inform you of it—that I labour unremittingly in my son's interests. I have established him, on his majority, in Germany, at a Court. My object now is to establish him in England. Promise me that it shall be the decided endeavour of your energies and talents to rise to the height I point out to you? You promise, I perceive,' he added, sharp in detecting the unpleasant predicament of a boy who is asked to speak priggishly. So then I could easily promise with a firm voice. He dropped certain explosive hints, which reminded me of the funny ideas of my state and greatness I had when a child. I shrugged at them; I cared nothing for revelations to come by-and-by. My object was to unite my father and grandfather on terms of friendship.

This was the view that now absorbed and fixed my mind. To have him a frequent visitor at Riversley, if not a resident in the house, enlivening them all, while I, perhaps, trifled a cavalry sabre, became one of my settled dreams. The difficult part of the scheme appeared to me the obtaining of my father's consent. I mentioned it, and he said immediately that he must have his freedom. 'Now, for instance,' said he, 'what is my desire at this moment? I have always a big one perched on a rock in the distance; but I speak of my present desire. And let it be supposed that the squire is one of us: we are returning to England. Well, I want to show you a stork's nest. We are not far enough South for the stork to build here. It is a fact, Richie, that I do want to show you the bird for luck, and as a feature of the country. And in me, a desire to do a thing partakes of the impetus of steam.

Well, you see we are jogging home to England. I resist myself for duty's sake: that I can do. But if the squire were here with his yea and his nay, by heavens! I should be off to the top of the Rhine like a tornado. I submit to circumstances: I cannot, and I will not, be dictated to by men.'

'That seems to me rather unreasonable,' I remonstrated.

'It is; I am ashamed of it,' he answered. 'Do as you will, Richie; set me down at Riversley, but under no slight, mark you. I keep my honour intact, like a bottled cordial; my unfailing comfort in adversity! I hand it to you, my son, on my death-bed, and say, "You have there the essence of my life. Never has it been known of me that I swallowed an insult."'

'Then, papa, I shall have a talk with the squire.'

'Make good your ground in the castle,' said he. 'I string a guitar outside. You toss me a key from the walls. If there is room, and I have leisure, I enter. If not, you know I am paving your way in other quarters. Riversley, my boy, is an excellent foothold and fortress: Riversley is not the world. At Riversley I should have to wear a double face, and, egad! a double stomach-bag, like young Jack feeding with the giant—one full of ambition, the other of provender. That place is our touchstone to discover whether we have prudence. We have, I hope. And we will have, Mr. Temple, a pleasant day or two in Paris.'

It was his habit to turn off the bent of these conversations by drawing Temple into them. Temple declared there was no feeling we were in a foreign country while he was our companion. We simply enjoyed strange scenes, looking idly out of our windows. Our recollection of the strangest scene ever witnessed filled us with I know not what scornful pleasure, and laughed in the background at any sight or marvel pretending to amuse us. Temple

and I cantered over the great Belgian battlefield, talking of Bella Vista tower, the statue, the margravine, our sour milk and black-bread breakfast, the little Princess Ottilia, with her 'It is my question,' and 'You were kind to my lambs, sir,' thoughtless of glory and dead bones. My father was very differently impressed. He was in an exultant glow, far outmatching the bloom on our faces when we rejoined him. I cried,—

'Papa, if the prince won't pay for a real statue, I will, and I 'll present it in your name!'

'To the nation?' cried he, staring, and arresting his arm in what seemed an orchestral movement.

'To the margravine!'

He heard, but had to gather his memory. He had been fighting the battle, and made light of Bella Vista. I found that incidents over which a day or two had rolled lost their features to him. He never smiled at recollections. If they were forced on him noisily by persons he liked, perhaps his face was gay, but only for a moment. The gaiety of his nature drew itself from hot-springs of hopefulness: our arrival in England, our interviews there, my majority Burgundy, my revisitation of Germany —these events to come gave him the aspect children wear out a-Maying or in an orchard. He discussed the circumstances connected with the statue as dry matter-of-fact, and unless it was his duty to be hilarious at the dinner-table, he was hardly able to respond to a call on his past life and mine. His future, too, was present tense: 'We do this,' not 'we will do this'; so that, generally, no sooner did we speak of an anticipated scene than he was acting in it. I studied him eagerly, I know, and yet quite unconsciously, and I came to no conclusions. Boys are always putting down the ciphers of their observations of people beloved by them, but do not add up a sum total.

Our journey home occupied nearly eleven weeks, owing to stress of money on two occasions. In Brussels I beheld him with a little beggar-girl in his arms.

'She has asked me for a copper coin, Richie,' he said, squeezing her fat cheeks to make cherries of her lips.

I recommended him to give her a silver one.

'Something, Richie, I must give the little wench, for I have kissed her, and, in my list of equivalents, gold would be the sole form of repayment after that. You must buy me off with honour, my boy.'

I was compelled to receive a dab from the child's nose, by way of a kiss, in return for buying him off with honour.

The child stumped away on the pavement fronting our hotel, staring at its fist that held the treasure.

'Poor pet wee drab of it!' exclaimed my father. 'One is glad, Richie, to fill a creature out of one's emptiness. Now she toddles; she is digesting it rapidly. The last performance of one's purse is rarely so pleasant as that. I owe it to her that I made the discovery in time.'

In this manner I also made the discovery that my father had no further supply of money, none whatever. How it had run out without his remarking it, he could not tell; he could only assure me that he had become aware of the fact while searching vainly for a coin to bestow on the beggar-girl. I despatched a letter attested by a notary of the city, applying for money to the banker to whom Colonel Goodwin had introduced me on my arrival on the Continent. The money came, and in the meantime we had formed acquaintances and entertained them; they were chiefly half-pay English military officers, dashing men. One, a Major Dykes, my father established in our hotel, and we carried him on to Paris, where, consequent upon our hospitalities, the purse was again deficient.

Two reasons for not regretting it were adduced by my father; firstly, that it taught me not to despise the importance of possessing money; secondly, that we had served our country by assisting Dykes, who was on the scent of a new and terrible weapon of destruction, which he believed to be in the hands of the French Government. Major Dykes disappeared on the scent, but we had the satisfaction of knowing that we had done our best toward saving the Navy of Great Britain from being blown out of water. Temple and I laughed over Major Dykes, and he became our puppet for by-play, on account of his enormous whiskers, his passion for strong drinks, and his air of secresy. My father's faith in his patriotic devotedness was sufficient to withhold me from suspicions of his character. Whenever my instinct, or common sense, would have led me to differ with my father in opinion fun supervened; I was willing that everything in the world should be as he would have it be, and took up with a spirit of laughter, too happy in having won him, in having fished him out of the deep sea at one fling of the net, as he said, to care for accuracy of sentiment in any other particular.

Our purse was at its lowest ebb; he suggested no means of replenishing it, and I thought of none. He had heard that it was possible to live in Paris upon next to nothing with very great luxury, so we tried it; we strolled through the lilac aisles among bonnes and babies, attended military spectacles, rode on omnibuses, dined on the country heights, went to theatres, and had a most pleasurable time, gaining everywhere front places, friendly smiles, kind little services, in a way that would have been incomprehensible to me but for my consciousness of the magical influence of my father's address, a mixture of the ceremonious and the affable such as the people could not withstand.

'The poet is perhaps, on the whole, more exhilarating than the alderman,' he said.

These were the respective names given by him to the empty purse and the full purse. We vowed we preferred the poet.

'Ay,' said he, 'but for all that the alderman is lighter on his feet: I back him to be across the Channel first. The object of my instructions to you will be lost, Richie, if I find you despising the Alderman's Pegasus. On money you mount. We are literally chained here, you know, there is no doubt about it; and we are adding a nail to our fetters daily. True, you are accomplishing the Parisian accent. Paris has also this immense advantage over all other cities: 'tis the central hotel on the high-road of civilization. In Paris you meet your friends to a certainty; it catches them every one in turn; so now we must abroad early and late, and cut for trumps.' A meeting with a friend of my father, Mr. Monterez Williams, was the result of our resolute adoption of this system. He helped us on to Boulogne, where my father met another friend, to whom he gave so sumptuous a dinner that we had not money enough to pay the hotel bill.

'Now observe the inconvenience of leaving Paris,' said he. 'Ten to one we shall have to return. We will try a week's whistling on the jetty; and if no luck comes, and you will admit, Richie—Mr. Temple, I call your attention to it—that luck will scarcely come in profuse expedition through the narrow neck of a solitary seaport, why, we must return to Paris.'

I proposed to write to my aunt Dorothy for money, but he would not hear of that. After two or three days of whistling, I saw my old friend, Mr. Bannerbridge, step out of the packet-boat. On condition of my writing to my aunt to say that I was coming home, he advanced

me the sum we were in need of, grudgingly though, and with the prediction that we should break down again, which was verified. It occurred only a stage from Riversley, where my grandfather's name was good as coin of the realm. Besides, my father remained at the inn to guarantee the payment of the bill, while Temple and I pushed on in a fly with the two dozen of Hock. It could hardly be called a break-down, but my father was not unwilling for me to regard it in that light. Among his parting remarks was an impressive adjuration to me to cultivate the squire's attachment at all costs.

'Do this,' he said, 'and I shall know that the lesson I have taught you on your journey homeward has not been thrown away. My darling boy! my curse through life has been that the sense of weight in money is a sense I am and was born utterly a stranger to. The consequence is, my grandest edifices fall; there is no foundation for them. Not that I am worse, understand me, than under a temporary cloud, and the blessing of heaven has endowed me with a magnificent constitution. Heaven forefend that I should groan for myself, or you for me! But digest what you have learnt, Richie; press nothing on the squire; be guided by the advice of that esteemed and admirable woman, your aunt Dorothy. And, by the way, you may tell her confidentially of the progress of your friendship with the Princess Ottilia. Here I shall employ my hours in a tranquil study of nature until I see you.' Thus he sped me forward.

We sighted Riversley about mid-day on a sunny June morning. Compared with the view from Bella Vista, our firs looked scanty, our heath-tracts dull, as places having no page of history written on them, our fresh green meadows not more than commonly homely. I was so full of my sense of triumph in my adventurous

journey and the recovery of my father, that I gazed on the old Grange from a towering height. The squire was on the lawn, surrounded by a full company: the Ilchesters, the Ambroses, the Wilfords, Captain and Squire Gregory Bulsted, the Rubreys, and others, all bending to roses, to admire, smell, or pluck. Charming groups of ladies were here and there; and Temple whispered as we passed them:

'We beat foreigners in our women, Richie.'

I, making it my business to talk with perfect unconcern, replied:

'Do you think so? Perhaps. Not in all cases'; all the while I was exulting at the sweet beams of England radiating from these dear early-morning-looking women.

My aunt Dorothy swam up to me, and, kissing me, murmured:

'Take no rebuff from your grandpapa, darling.'

My answer was:

'I have found him!'

Captain Bulsted sang out our names; I caught sight of Julia Rippenger's face; the squire had his back turned to me, which reminded me of my first speech with Captain Jasper Welsh, and I thought to myself, I know something of the world now, and the thing is to keep a good temper. Here there was no wire-coil to intercept us, so I fronted him quickly.

'Hulloa!' he cried, and gave me his shoulder.

'Temple is your guest, sir,' said I.

He was obliged to stretch out his hand to Temple.

A prompt instinct warned me that I must show him as much Beltham as I could summon.

'Dogs and horses all right, sir?' I asked.

Captain Bulsted sauntered near.

'Here, William,' said the squire, 'tell this fellow about my stables.'

'In excellent condition, Harry Richmond,' returned the captain.

'Oh! he 's got a new name, I 'll swear,' said the squire.

'Not I!'

'Then what have you got of your trip, eh?'

'A sharper eye than I had, sir.'

'You 've been sharpening it in London, have you?'

'I 've been a little farther than London, squire.'

'Well, you 're not a liar.'

'There, you see the lad can stand fire!' Captain Bulsted broke in. 'Harry Richmond, I 'm proud to shake your hand, but I 'll wait till you 're through the ceremony with your grandad.'

The squire's hands were crossed behind him. I smiled boldly in his face.

'Shall I make the tour of you to get hold of one of them, sir?' He frowned and blinked.

'Shuffle in among the ladies; you seem to know how to make friends among them,' he said, and pretended to disengage his right hand for the purpose of waving it toward one of the groups.

I seized it, saying heartily, 'Grandfather, upon my honour, I love you, and I 'm glad to be home again.'

'Mind you, you 're not at home till you 've begged Uberly's pardon in public, you know what for,' he rejoined.

'Leaving the horse at that inn is on my conscience,' said I.

The squire grumbled: 'All the better; keep him there a bit.'

'Suppose he kicks?' said I; and the captain laughed, and the squire too, and I was in such high spirits I thought of a dozen witty suggestions relative to the seat of the conscience, and grieved for a minute at going to the ladies.

Captain Bulsted convoyed me to pretty Irish-eyed Julia Rippenger. Temple had previously made discovery of Janet Ilchester. Relating our adventures on different parts of the lawn, we both heard that Colonel Goodwin and his daughter had journeyed down to Riversley to smooth the way for my return; so my easy conquest of the squire was not at all wonderful; nevertheless, I maintained my sense of triumph, and was assured in my secret heart that I had a singular masterfulness, and could, when I chose to put it forth, compel my grandfather to hold out his hand to my father as he had done to me.

Julia Rippenger was a guest at Riversley through a visit paid to her by my aunt Dorothy in alarm at my absence. The intention was to cause the squire a distraction. It succeeded; for the old man needed lively prattle of a less childish sort than Janet Ilchester's at his elbow, and that young lady, though true enough in her fashion, was the ardent friend of none but flourishing heads; whereas Julia, finding my name under a cloud at Riversley, spoke of me, I was led to imagine by Captain Bulsted, as a ballad hero, a gloriful fellow, a darling whose deeds were all pardonable—a mere puff of smoke in the splendour of his nature.

'To hear the young lady allude to *me* in that style!' he confided to my ear, with an ineffable heave of his big chest.

Certain good influences, at any rate, preserved the squire from threatening to disinherit me. Colonel Goodwin had spoken to him very manfully and wisely as to my relations with my father. The squire, it was assumed by my aunt, and by Captain Bulsted and Julia, had undertaken to wink at my father's claims on my affection. All three vehemently entreated me to make no mention of the present of Hock to him, and not to attempt to bring about an interview. Concerning the

yellow wine I disregarded their advice, for I held it to be a point of filial duty, and an obligation religiously contracted beneath a cathedral dome; so I performed the task of offering the Hock, stating that it was of ancient birth. The squire bunched his features; he tutored his temper, and said not a word. I fancied all was well. Before I tried the second step, Captain Bulsted rode over to my father, who himself generously enjoined the prudent course, in accordance with his aforegone precepts. He was floated off, as he termed it, from the inn where he lay stranded, to London, by I knew not what heaven-sent gift of money, bidding me keep in view the grand career I was to commence at Dipwell on arriving at my majority. I would have gone with him had he beckoned a finger. The four-and-twenty bottles of Hock were ranged in a line for the stable-boys to cock-shy at them under the squire's supervision and my enforced attendance, just as revolutionary criminals are executed. I felt like the survivor of friends, who had seen their blood flow.

He handed me a cheque for the payment of debts incurred in my recent adventures. Who could help being grateful for it? And yet his remorseless spilling of the kindly wine full of mellow recollections of my father and the little princess, drove the sense of gratitude out of me.

CHAPTER XX

NEWS OF A FRESH CONQUEST OF MY FATHER'S

Temple went to sea. The wonder is that I did not go with him: we were both in agreement that adventures were the only things worth living for, and we despised

English fellows who had seen no place but England. I could not bear the long separation from my father: that was my reason for not insisting on the squire's consent to my becoming a midshipman. After passing a brilliant examination, Temple had the good fortune to join Captain Bulsted's ship, and there my honest-hearted friend dismally composed his letter of confession, letting me know that he had been untrue to friendship, and had proposed to Janet Ilchester, and interchanged vows with her. He begged my forgiveness, but he did love her so!—he hoped I would not mind. I sent him a reproachful answer; I never cared for him more warmly than when I saw the letter shoot the slope of the post-office mouth. Aunt Dorothy undertook to communicate assurances of my undying affection for him. As for Janet—Temple's letter, in which he spoke of her avowed preference for Oriental presents, and declared his intention of accumulating them on his voyages, was a harpoon in her side. By means of it I worried and terrified her until she was glad to have it all out before the squire. What did he do? He said that Margery, her mother, was niggardly; a girl wanted presents, and I did not act up to my duty; I ought to buy Turkey and Tunis to please her, if she had a mind for them.

The further she was flattered the faster she cried; she had the face of an old setter with these hideous tears. The squire promised her fifty pounds per annum in quarterly payments, that she might buy what presents she liked, and so tie herself to constancy. He said aside to me, as if he had a knowledge of the sex—'Young ladies must have lots of knickknacks, or their eyes 'll be caught right and left, remember that.' I should have been delighted to see her caught. She talked of love in a ludicrous second-hand way, sending me into fits of disgusted laughter. On other occasions her lips were not

hypocritical, and her figure anything but awkward. She was a bold, plump girl, fond of male society. Heriot enraptured her. I believed at the time she would have appointed a year to marry him in, had he put the question. But too many women were in love with Heriot. He and I met Kiomi on the road to the race-course on the South-downs; the prettiest race-course in England, shut against gipsies. A bare-footed swarthy girl ran beside our carriage and tossed us flowers. He and a friend of his, young Lord Destrier, son of the Marquis of Edbury, who knew my father well, talked and laughed with her, and thought her so very handsome that I likewise began to stare, and I suddenly called 'Kiomi!' She bounded back into the hedge. This was our second meeting. It would have been a pleasant one had not Heriot and Destrier pretended all sorts of things about our previous acquaintance. Neither of us, they said, had made a bad choice, but why had we separated? She snatched her hand out of mine with a grin of anger like puss in a fury. We had wonderful fun with her. They took her to a great house near the race-course, and there, assisted by one of the young ladies, dressed her in flowing silks, and so passed her through the gate of the enclosure interdicted to bare feet. There they led her to groups of fashionable ladies, and got themselves into pretty scrapes. They said she was an Indian. Heriot lost his wagers and called her a witch. She replied, 'You 'll find I 'm one, young man,' and that was the only true thing she spoke of the days to come. Owing to the hubbub around the two who were guilty of this unmeasured joke upon consequential ladies, I had to conduct her to the gate. Instantly, and without a good-bye, she scrambled up her skirts and ran at strides across the road and through the wood, out of sight. She won her dress and a piece of jewelry.

With Heriot I went on a sad expedition, the same I had set out upon with Temple. This time I saw my father behind those high red walls, once so mysterious and terrible to me. Heriot made light of prisons for debt. He insisted, for my consolation, that they had but a temporary dishonourable signification; very estimable gentlemen, as well as scamps, inhabited them, he said. The impression produced by my visit—the feasting among ruined men who believed in good luck the more the lower they fell from it, and their fearful admiration of my imprisoned father—was as if I had drunk a stupefying liquor. I was unable clearly to reflect on it. Daily afterwards, until I released him, I made journeys to usurers to get a loan on the faith of the reversion of my mother's estate. Heriot, like the real friend he was, helped me with his name to the bond. When my father stood free, I had the proudest heart alive; and as soon as we had parted, the most amazed. For a long while, for years, the thought of him was haunted by racket-balls and bearded men in their shirt-sleeves; a scene sickening to one's pride. Yet it had grown impossible for me to think of him without pride. I delighted to hear him. We were happy when we were together. And, moreover, he swore to me on his honour, in Mrs. Waddy's presence, that he and the constable would henceforth keep an even pace. His exuberant cheerfulness and charming playfulness were always fascinating. His visions of our glorious future enchained me. How it was that something precious had gone out of my life, I could not comprehend.

Julia Rippenger's marriage with Captain Bulsted was an agreeable distraction. Unfortunately for my peace of mind, she went to the altar poignantly pale. My aunt Dorothy settled the match. She had schemed it, her silence and half-downcast look seemed to confess,

for the sake of her own repose, but neither to her nor to others did that come of it. I wrote a plain warning of the approaching catastrophe to Heriot, and received his reply after it was over, to this effect:—

'In my regiment we have a tolerable knowledge of women. They like change, old Richie, and we must be content to let them take their twenty shillings for a sovereign. I myself prefer the Navy to the Army; I have no right to complain. Once she swore one thing, now she has sworn another. We will hope the lady will stick to her choice, and not seek smaller change. "I could not forgive coppers"; that 's quoting your dad. I have no wish to see the uxorious object, though you praise him. His habit of falling under the table is middling old-fashioned; but she may like him the better, or she may cure him. Whatever she is as a woman, she was a very nice girl to enliven the atmosphere of the switch. I sometimes look at a portrait I have of J. R., which, I fancy, Mrs. William Bulsted has no right to demand of me; but supposing her husband thinks he has, why then I must consult my brother officers. We want a war, old Richie, and I wish you were sitting at our mess, and not mooning about girls and women.'

I presumed from this that Heriot's passion for Julia was extinct. Aunt Dorothy disapproved of his tone, which I thought admirably philosophical and coxcombically imitable, an expression of the sort of thing I should feel on hearing of Janet Ilchester's nuptials.

The daring and success of that foreign adventure of mine had, with the aid of Colonel and Clara Goodwin, convinced the squire of the folly of standing between me and him I loved. It was considered the best sign possible that he should take me down on an inspection of his various estates and his great coal-mine, and introduce me as the heir who would soon relieve him of the task.

Perhaps he thought the smell of wealth a promising cure for such fits of insubordination as I had exhibited. My occasional absences on my own account were winked at. On my return the squire was sour and snappish, I cheerful and complaisant; I grew cold, and he solicitous; he would drink my health with a challenge to heartiness, and I drank to him heartily and he relapsed to a fit of sulks, informing me, that in his time young men knew when they were well off, and asking me whether I was up to any young men's villanies, had any concealed debts perchance, because, if so—Oh! he knew the ways of youngsters, especially when they fell into bad hands:—the list of bad titles rumbled on in an underbreath like cowardly thunder:—well, to cut the matter short, because, if so, his cheque-book was at my service; didn't I know that, eh? Not being immediately distressed by debt, I did not exhibit the gush of gratitude, and my sedate 'Thank you, sir,' confused his appeal for some sentimental show of affection.

I am sure the poor old man suffered pangs of jealousy; I could even at times see into his breast and pity him. He wanted little more than to be managed; but a youth when he perceives absurdity in opposition to him chafes at it as much as if he were unaware that it is laughable. Had the squire talked to me in those days seriously and fairly of my father's character, I should have abandoned my system of defence to plead for him as before a judge. By that time I had gained the knowledge that my father was totally of a different construction from other men. I wished the squire to own simply to his loveable nature. I could have told him women did. Without citing my dear aunt Dorothy, or so humble a creature as the devoted Mrs. Waddy, he had sincere friends among women, who esteemed him, and were staunch adherents to his cause; and if the widow of the City knight, Lady Sampleman,

aimed openly at being something more, she was not the less his friend. Nor was it only his powerful animation, generosity, and grace that won them.

There occurred when I was a little past twenty, already much in his confidence, one of those strange crucial events which try a man publicly, and bring out whatever can be said for and against him. A young Welsh heiress fell in love with him. She was, I think, seven or eight months younger than myself, a handsome, intelligent, high-spirited girl, rather wanting in polish, and perhaps in the protecting sense of decorum. She was well-born, of course—she was Welsh. She was really well-bred too, though somewhat brusque. The young lady fell hopelessly in love with my father at Bath. She gave out that he was not to be for one moment accused of having encouraged her by secret addresses. It was her unsolicited avowal—thought by my aunt Dorothy immodest, not by me—that she preferred him to all living men. Her name was Anna Penrhys. The squire one morning received a letter from her family, requesting him to furnish them with information as to the antecedents of a gentleman calling himself Augustus Fitz-George Frederick William Richmond Guelph Roy, for purposes which would, they assured him, warrant the inquiry. He was for throwing the letter aside, shouting that he thanked his God he was unacquainted with anybody on earth with such an infernal list of names as that. Roy! Who knew anything of Roy?

'It happens to be my father's present name,' said I.

'It sounds to me like the name of one of those blackguard adventurers who creep into families to catch the fools,' pursued the squire, not hearing me with his eyes.

'The letter at least must be answered,' my aunt Dorothy said.

'It shall be answered!' the squire worked himself up to roar.

He wrote a reply, the contents of which I could guess at from my aunt's refusal to let me be present at the discussion of it. The letter despatched was written by her, with his signature. Her eyes glittered for a whole day.

Then came a statement of the young lady's case from Bath.

'Look at that! look at that!' cried the squire, and went on, 'Look at that!' in a muffled way. There was a touch of dignity in his unforced anger.

My aunt winced displeasingly to my sight: 'I see nothing to astonish one.'

'Nothing to astonish one!' The squire set his mouth in imitation of her. 'You see nothing to astonish one? Well, ma'am, when a man grows old enough to be a grandfather, I do see something astonishing in a child of nineteen—by George! it 's out o' nature. But you women like monstrosities. Oh! I understand. Here 's an heiress to fifteen thousand a year. It 's not astonishing if every ruined gambler and scapegrace in the kingdom 's hunting her hot! no, no! that 's not astonishing. I suppose she has her money in a coal-mine.'

The squire had some of his in a coal-mine; my mother once had; it was the delivery of a blow at my father, signifying that he had the scent for this description of wealth. I left the room. The squire then affected that my presence had constrained him, by bellowing out epithets easy for me to hear in the hall and out on the terrace. He vowed by solemn oath he was determined to save this girl from ruin. My aunt's speech was brief.

I was summoned to Bath by my father in a curious peremptory tone implying the utmost urgent need of me.

I handed the letter to the squire at breakfast, saying, 'You must spare me for a week or so, sir.'

He spread the letter flat with his knife, and turned it over with his fork.

'Harry,' said he, half-kindly, and choking, 'you 're better out of it.'

'I 'm the best friend he could have by him, sir.'

'You 're the best tool he could have handy, for you 're a gentleman.'

'I hope I shan't offend you, grandfather, but I must go.'

'Don't you see, Harry Richmond, you 're in for an infernal marriage ceremony there!'

'The young lady is not of age,' interposed my aunt.

'Eh? An infernal elopement, then. It 's clear the girl 's mad—head 's cracked as a cocoa-nut bowled by a monkey, brains nowhere. Harry, you 're not a greenhorn; you don't suspect you 're called down there to stop it, do you? You jump plump into a furious lot of the girl's relatives; you might as well take a header into a leech-pond. Come! you 're a man; think for yourself. Don't have this affair on your conscience, boy. I tell you, Harry Richmond, I 'm against your going. You go against my will; you offend me, sir; you drag my name and blood into the mire. She 's Welsh, is she? Those Welsh are addle-pated, every one. Poor girl!'

He threw a horrible tremour into his accent of pity.

My aunt expressed her view mildly, that I was sent for to help cure the young lady of her delusion.

'And take her himself!' cried the squire. 'Harry, you wouldn't go and do that? Why, the law, man, the law—the whole country 'd be up about it. You 'll be stuck in a coloured caricature!'

He was really alarmed lest this should be one of the consequences of my going, and described some of the

scourging caricatures of his day with an intense appreciation of their awfulness as engines of the moral sense of the public. I went nevertheless.

CHAPTER XXI

A PROMENADE IN BATH

I FOUND my father at his hotel, sitting with his friend Jorian DeWitt, whom I had met once before, and thought clever. He was an ex-captain of dragoons, a martyr to gout, and addicted to Burgundy, which necessitated his resorting to the waters, causing him, as he said, between his appetites and the penance he paid for them, to lead the life of a pendulum. My father was in a tempered gay mood, examining a couple of the county newspapers. One abused him virulently; he was supported by the other. After embracing me, he desired me to listen while he read out opposing sentences from the columns of these eminent journals:—

'The person calling himself "Roy," whose monstrously absurd pretensions are supposed to be embodied in this self-dubbed surname . . .'

'—The celebrated and courtly Mr. Richmond Roy, known no less by the fascination of his manners than by his romantic history . . .'

'—has very soon succeeded in making himself the talk of the town . . .'

'—has latterly become the theme of our tea-tables . . .'

'—which is always the adventurer's privilege . . .'

'—through no fault of his own . . .'

'—That we may throw light on the blushing aspirations of a crow-sconced Cupid, it will be as well to recall the antecedents of this (if no worse) preposterous imitation buck of the old school . . .'

'—Suffice it, without seeking to draw the veil from those affecting chapters of his earlier career which kindled for him the enthusiastic sympathy of all classes of his countrymen, that he is not yet free from a tender form of persecution . . .'

'—We think we are justified in entitling him the Perkin Warbeck of society . . .'

'—Reference might be made to mythological heroes . . .'

Hereat I cried out mercy.

Captain DeWitt (stretched nursing a leg) removed his silk handkerchief from his face to murmur,—

'The bass stedfastly drowns the treble, if this is meant for harmony.'

My father rang up the landlord, and said to him,—

'The choicest of your cellar at dinner to-day, Mr. Lumley; and, mind you, I am your guest, and I exercise my right of compelling you to sit down with us and assist in consuming a doubtful quality of wine. We dine four. Lay for five, if your conscience is bad, and I excuse you.'

The man smirked. He ventured to say he had never been so tempted to supply an inferior article.

My father smiled on him.

'You invite our editorial advocate?' said Captain DeWitt.

'Our adversary,' said my father.

I protested I would not sit at table with him. But he assured me he believed his advocate and his adversary to be one and the same, and referred me to the collated sentences.

'The man must earn his bread, Richie, boy! To tell truth, it is the advocate I wish to rebuke, and to praise the adversary. It will confound him.'

'It does me,' said DeWitt.

'You perceive, Jorian, a policy in dining these men of the Press now and occasionally, considering their growing power, do you not?'

'Ay, ay! it 's a great gossiping machine, mon Roy. I prefer to let it spout.'

'I crave your permission to invite him in complimentary terms, cousin Jorian. He is in the town; remember, it is for the good of the nation that he and his like should have the opportunity of studying good society. As to myself personally, I give him carte blanche to fire his shots at me.'

Near the fashionable hour of the afternoon my father took my arm, Captain DeWitt a stick, and we walked into the throng and buzz.

'Whenever you are, to quote our advocate, the theme of tea-tables, Richie,' said my father, 'walk through the crowd: it will wash you. It is doing us the honour to observe us. We in turn discover an interest in its general countenance.'

He was received, as we passed, with much staring; here and there a lifting of hats, and some blunt nodding that incensed me, but he, feeling me bristle, squeezed my hand and talked of the scene, and ever and anon gathered a line of heads and shed an indulgent bow along them; so on to the Casino. Not once did he offend my taste and make my acute sense of self-respect shiver by appearing grateful for a recognition, or anxious to court it, though the curtest salute met his acknowledgement.

The interior of the Casino seemed more hostile. I remarked it to him. 'A trifle more eye-glassy,' he murmured. He was quite at his ease there.

'We walk up and down, my son,' he said, in answer to a question of mine, 'because there are very few who can; even walking is an art; and if nobody does, the place is dull.'

'The place is pretty well supplied with newspapers,' said Captain DeWitt.

'And dowagers, friend Jorian. They are cousins. 'Tis the fashion to have our tattle done by machinery. They have their opportunity to compare the portrait with the original. Come, invent some scandal for us; let us make this place our social Exchange. I warrant a good bold piece of invention will fit them, too, some of them. Madam,'—my father bowed low to the beckoning of a fan,—'I trust your ladyship did not chance to overhear that last remark I made?'

The lady replied: 'I should have shut my eyes if I had. I called you to tell me, who is the young man?'

'For twenty years I have lived in the proud belief that he is my son!'

'I would not disturb it for the world.' She did me the honour to inspect me from the lowest waistcoat button to the eyebrows. 'Bring him to me to-night. Captain DeWitt, you have forsaken my whist-tables.'

'Purely temporary fits of unworthiness, my lady.'

'In English, gout?'

'Not gout in the conscience, I trust,' said my father.

'Oh! that 's curable,' laughed the captain.

'You men of repartee would be nothing without your wickedness,' the lady observed.

'Man was supposed to be incomplete——' Captain DeWitt affected a murmur.

She nodded 'Yes, yes,' and lifted eyes on my father. 'So you have not given up going to church?'

He bent and spoke low.

She humphed her lips. 'Very well, I will see. It

must be a night in the early part of the week after next, then: I really don't know why I should serve you; but I like your courage.'

'I cannot consent to accept your ladyship's favour on account of one single virtue,' said he, drooping.

She waved him to move forward.

During this frothy dialogue, I could see that the ear of the assembly had been caught by the sound of it.

'That,' my father informed me, 'is the great Lady Wilts. Now you will notice a curious thing. Lady Wilts is not so old but that, as our Jorian here says of her, she is marriageable. Hence, Richie, she is a queen to make the masculine knee knock the ground. I fear the same is not to be said of her rival, Lady Denewdney, whom our good Jorian compares to an antiquated fledgeling emerging with effort from a nest of ill construction and worse cement. She is rich, she is sharp, she uses her quill; she is emphatically not marriageable. Bath might still accept her as a rival queen, only she is always behindhand in seizing an occasion. Now you will catch sight of her fan working in a minute. She is envious and imitative. It would be undoubtedly better policy on her part to continue to cut me: she cannot, she is beginning to rustle like December's oaks. If Lady Wilts has me, why, she must. We refrain from noticing her until we have turned twice. Ay, Richie, there is this use in adversity; it teaches one to play sword and target with etiquette and retenue better than any crowned king in Europe. For me now to cross to her summons immediately would be a gross breach of homage to Lady Wilts, who was inspired to be the first to break through the fence of scandal environing me. But I must still show that I am independent. These people must not suppose that I have to cling to a party. Let them take sides; I am on fair terms with both the rivals. I show

just such a nuance of a distinction in my treatment of them—just such—enough, I mean, to make the flattered one warm to me, and t' other be jealous of her. Ay, Richie, these things are trivial things beyond the grave; but here are we, my boy; and, by the way, I suspect the great campaign of my life is opening.'

Captain DeWitt said that if so it would be the tenth, to his certain knowledge.

'Not *great* campaign!' my father insisted: 'mere skirmishes before this.'

They conversed in humorous undertones, each in turn seeming to turn over the earth of some amusing reminiscence, so rapt, that as far as regarded their perception of it, the assembly might have been nowhere. Perhaps, consequently, they became observed with all but undivided attention. My father's hand was on my shoulder, his head toward Captain DeWitt; instead of subduing his voice, he gave it a moderate pitch, at which it was not intrusive, and was musical, to my ear charming, especially when he continued talking through his soft laughter, like a hunter that would in good humour press for his game through links of water-nymphs.

Lady Denewdney's fan took to beating time meditatively. Two or three times she kept it elevated, and in vain: the flow of their interchangeing speech was uninterrupted. At last my father bowed to her from a distance. She signalled: his eyelids pleaded short sight, awakening to the apprehension of a pleasant fact: the fan tapped, and he halted his march, leaning scarce perceptibly in her direction. The fan showed distress. Thereupon, his voice subsided in his conversation, with a concluding flash of animation across his features, like a brook that comes to the leap on a descent, and he left us.

Captain DeWitt and I were led by a common attraction to the portico, the truth being that we neither of us

could pace easily nor talk with perfect abandonment under eye-fire any longer.

'Look,' said he to me, pointing at the equipages and equestrians: 'you 'll see a sight like this in dozens—dozens of our cities and towns! The wealth of this country is frightful.'

My reply, addressed at the same time mentally to Temple at sea, was:

'Well, as long as we have the handsomest women, I don't care.'

Captain DeWitt was not so sure that we had. The Provençal women, the women of a part of South Germany, and certain favoured spots of Italy, might challenge us, he thought. This was a point I could argue on, or, I should rather say, take up the cudgels, for I deemed such opinions treason to one's country and an outrage to common sense, and I embarked in controversy with the single-minded intention of knocking down the man who held them.

He accepted his thrashing complacently.

'Now here comes a young lady on horseback,' he said; 'do you spy her? dark hair, thick eyebrows, rides well, followed by a groom. Is she a Beauty?'

In the heat of patriotism I declared she was handsome, and repeated it, though I experienced a twinge of remorse, like what I should have felt had I given Minerva the apple instead of Venus.

'Oh!' he commented, and stepped down to the road to meet her, beginning, in my hearing, 'I am the bearer of a compliment—' Her thick eyebrows stood in a knot, then she glanced at me and hung pensive. She had not to wait a minute before my father came to her side.

'I knew you would face them,' she said.

He threw back his head like a swimmer tossing spray from his locks.

'You have read the paper?' he asked.

'You have horsewhipped the writer?' she rejoined.

'Oh! the poor *penster*!'

'Nay, we can't pretend to pity him!'

'Could we condescend to offer him satisfaction?'

'Would he dare to demand it?'

'We will lay the case before Lady Wilts to-night.'

'You are there to-night?'

'At Lady Denewdney's to-morrow night—if I may indulge a hope?'

'Both? Oh! bravo, bravo! Tell me nothing more just now. How did you manage it? I must have a gallop. Yes, I shall be at both, be sure of that.'

My father introduced me.

'Let me present to your notice my son, Harry Lepel Richmond, Miss Penrhys.'

She touched my fingers, and nodded at me; speaking to him:

'He has a boy's taste: I hear he esteems me moderately well-favoured.'

'An inherited error certain to increase with age!'

'Now you have started me!' she exclaimed, and lashed the flanks of her horse.

We had evidently been enacting a part deeply interesting to the population of Bath, for the heads of all the strolling groups were bent on us; and when Miss Penrhys cantered away, down dropped eyeglasses, and the promenade returned to activity. I fancied I perceived that my father was greeted more cordially on his way back to the hotel.

'You do well, Richie,' he observed, 'in preserving your composure until you have something to say. Wait for your opening; it will come, and the right word will come with it. The main things are to be able to stand well,

walk well, and look with an eye at home in its socket:—I put you my hand on any man or woman born of high blood.—Not a brazen eye!—of the two extremes, I prefer the beaten spaniel sort.—Blindfold me, but I put you my hand on them. As to repartee, you must have it. Wait for that, too. Do not,' he groaned, 'do not force it! Bless my soul, what is there in the world so bad?' And rising to the upper notes of his groan· 'Ignorance, density, total imbecility, is better; I would rather any day of my life sit and carve for guests—the grossest of human trials—a detestable dinner, than be doomed to hear some wretched fellow—and you hear the old as well as the young—excruciate feelings which, where they exist, cannot but be exquisitely delicate. Goodness gracious me! to see the man pumping up his wit! For me, my visage is of an unalterable gravity whenever I am present at one of these exhibitions. I care not if I offend. Let them say I wish to revolutionize society—I declare to you, Richie boy, delightful to my heart though I find your keen stroke of repartee, still your fellow who takes the thrust gracefully, knows when he 's traversed by a master-stroke, and yields sign of it, instead of plunging like a spitted buffalo and asking us to admire his agility—you follow me?—I say I hold that man—and I delight vastly in ready wit; it is the wine of language!—I regard that man as the superior being. True, he is not so entertaining.'

My father pressed on my arm to intimate, with a cavernous significance of eyebrow, that Captain DeWitt had the gift of repartee in perfection.

'Jorian,' said he, 'will you wager our editor declines to dine with us?'

The answer struck me as only passable. I think it was:—

'When rats smell death in toasted cheese.'

Captain DeWitt sprang up the staircase of our hotel to his bedroom.

'I should not have forced him,' my father mused. 'Jorian DeWitt has at times brilliant genius, Richie—in the way of rejoinders, I mean. This is his happy moment—his one hour's dressing for dinner. I have watched him; he most thoroughly enjoys it! I am myself a quick or slow dresser, as the case may be. But to watch Jorian you cannot help entering into his enjoyment of it. He will have his window with a view of the sunset; there is his fire, his warmed linen, and his shirt-studs; his bath, his choice of a dozen things he will or will not wear; the landlord's or host's *menu* is up against the looking-glass, and the extremely handsome miniature likeness of his wife, who is in the madhouse, by a celebrated painter, I forget his name. Jorian calls this, new birth—you catch his idea? He throws off the old and is on with the new with a highly hopeful anticipation. His valet is a scoundrel, but never fails in extracting the *menu* from the cook, wherever he may be, and, in fine, is too attentive to the hour's devotion to be discarded! Poor Jorian. I know no man I pity so much.'

I conceived him, I confessed, hardly pitiable, though not enviable.

'He has but six hundred a year, and a passion for Burgundy,' said my father.

We were four at table. The editor came, and his timidity soon wore off in the warmth of hospitality. He appeared a kind exciteable little man, glad of his dinner from the first, and in due time proud of his entertainer. His response to the toast of the Fourth Estate was an apology for its behaviour to my father. He regretted it; he regretted it. A vinous speech.

My father heard him out. Addressing him subsequently,—

'I would not interrupt you in the delivery of your sentiments,' he said. 'I must, however, man to man, candidly tell you I should have wished to arrest your expressions of regret. They convey to my mind an idea, that on receipt of my letter of invitation, you attributed to me a design to corrupt you. Protest nothing, I beg. Editors are human, after all. Now, my object is, that as you write of me, you should have some knowledge of me; and I naturally am interested in one who does me so much honour. The facts of my life are at your disposal for publication and comment. Simply, I entreat you, say this one thing of me: I seek for justice, but I never complain of my fortunes. Providence decides:—that might be the motto engraven on my heart. Nay, I may risk declaring it is! In the end I shall be righted. Meanwhile you contribute to my happiness by favouring me with your society.'

'Ah, sir,' replied the little man, 'were all our great people like you! In the country—the provinces—they treat the representatives of the Fourth Estate as the squires a couple of generations back used to treat the parsons.'

'What! Have you got a place at their tables?' inquired Captain DeWitt.

'No, I cannot say that—not even below the salt. Mr. Richmond—Mr. Roy, you may not be aware of it: I am the proprietor of the opposition journals in this county. I tell you in confidence, one by itself would not pay; and I am a printer, sir, and it is on my conscience to tell you I have, in the course of business, been compelled this very morning to receive orders for the printing of various squibs and, I much fear, scurrilous things.'

My father pacified him.

'You will do your duty to your family, Mr. Hickson.'

Deeply moved, the little man pulled out proof-sheets and slips.

'Even now, at the eleventh hour,' he urged, 'there is time to correct any glaring falsehoods, insults, what not!'

My father accepted the copy of proofs.

'Not a word,—not a line! You spoke of the eleventh hour, Mr. Hickson. If we are at all near the eleventh, I must be on my way to make my bow to Lady Wilts; or is it Lady Denewdney's to-night? No, to-morrow night.'

A light of satisfaction came over Mr. Hickson's face at the mention of my father's visiting both these sovereign ladies.

As soon as we were rid of him, Captain DeWitt exclaimed,—

'If that 's the Fourth Estate, what 's the Realm?'

'The Estate,' pleaded my father, 'is here in its infancy —on all fours——'

'Prehensile! Egad, it has the vices of the other three besides its own. Do you mean that by putting it on all fours?'

'Jorian, I have noticed that when you are malignant you are not witty. We have to thank the man for not subjecting us to a pledge of secresy. My Lady Wilts will find the proofs amusing. And mark, I do not examine their contents before submitting them to her inspection. You will testify to the fact.'

I was unaware that my father played a master-stroke in handing these proof-sheets publicly to Lady Wilts for her perusal. The incident of the evening was the display of her character shown by Miss Penrhys in positively declining to quit the house until she likewise had cast her eye on them. One of her aunts wept. Their carriage was kept waiting an hour.

'You ask too much of me: I cannot turn her out'

Lady Wilts said to her uncle. And aside to my father, 'You will have to marry her.'

'In heaven's name keep me from marriage, my lady!' I heard him reply.

There was sincerity in his tone when he said that.

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION OF THE BATH EPISODE

The friends of Miss Penrhys were ill advised in trying to cry down a man like my father. Active persecution was the breath of life to him. When untroubled he was apt to let both his ambition and his dignity slumber. The squibs and scandal set afloat concerning him armed his wit, nerved his temper, touched him with the spirit of enterprise; he became a new creature. I lost sight of certain characteristics which I had begun to ponder over critically. I believed with all my heart that circumstances were blameable for much that did not quite please me. Upon the question of his magnanimity, as well as of his courage, there could not be two opinions. He would neither retort nor defend himself. I perceived some grandeur in his conduct, without, however, appreciating it cordially, as I did a refinement of discretion about him that kept him from brushing good taste while launched in ostentatious displays. He had a fine tact and a keen intuition. He may have thought it necessary to throw a little dust in my eyes; but I doubt his having done it, for he had only, as he knew, to make me jealous to blind me to his faults utterly, and he refrained.

In his allusions to the young lady he was apologetic, affectionate; one might have fancied oneself listening

to a gracious judge who had well weighed her case, and exculpated her from other excesses than that of a generous folly. Jorian DeWitt, a competent critic, pronounced his behaviour consummate at all points. For my behoof, he hinted antecedent reverses to the picture: meditating upon which, I traced them to the fatal want of money, and that I might be able to fortify him in case of need, I took my own counsel, and wrote to my aunt for the loan of as large a sum as she could afford to send. Her eagerness for news of our doings was insatiable. 'You do not describe her,' she replied, not naming Miss Penrhys; and again, 'I can form no image of her. Your accounts of her are confusing. Tell me earnestly, do you like her? She must be very wilful, but is she really nice? I want to know how she appears to my Harry's mind.'

My father borrowed these letters, and returning them to me, said, 'A good soul! the best of women! There—there is a treasure lost!' His forehead was clouded in speaking. He recommended me to assure my aunt that she would never have to take a family interest in Miss Penrhys. But this was not deemed perfectly satisfactory at Riversley. My aunt wrote: 'Am I to understand that you, Harry, raise objections to her? Think first whether she is in herself objectionable. She is rich, she may be prudent, she may be a forethoughtful person. She may not be able to support a bitter shock of grief. She may be one who can *help*. She may not be one whose heart will bear it. Put your own feelings aside, my dearest. Our duties cannot ever be clear to us until we do. It is possible for headstrong wilfulness and secret tenderness to go together. Think whether she is capable of sacrifice before you compel her to it. Do not inflict misery wantonly. One would like to see her. Harry, I brood on your future; that is why I seem to you preternaturally anxious about you.'

She seemed to me preternaturally anxious about Miss Penrhys.

My father listened in silence to my flippant satire on women's letters.

He answered after a pause,—

'Our Jorian says that women's letters must be read like anagrams. To put it familiarly, they are like a child's field of hop-scotch. You may have noticed the urchins at their game: a bit of tile, and a variety of compartments to pass it through to the base, hopping. Or no, Richie, pooh! 'tis an unworthy comparison, this hop-scotch. I mean, laddie, they write in zigzags; and so will you when your heart trumpets in your ear. Tell her, tell that dear noble good woman—say, we are happy, you and I, and alone, and shall be; and do me the favour—she loves you, my son—address her sometimes—she has been it—call her "mother"; she will like it: she deserves—nothing shall supplant her!'

He lost his voice.

She sent me three hundred pounds; she must have supposed the occasion pressing. Thus fortified against paternal improvidence, I expended a hundred in the purchase of a horse, and staked the remainder on him in a match, and was beaten. Disgusted with the horse, I sold him for half his purchase-money, and with that sum paid a bill to maintain my father's credit in the town. Figuratively speaking, I looked at my hands as astonished as I had been when the poor little rascal in the street snatched my cake, and gave me the vision of him gorging it in the flurried alley of the London crowd.

'Money goes,' I remarked.

'That is the general experience of the nature of money,' said my father freshly; 'but nevertheless you will be surprised to find how extraordinarily few are the people to make allowance for particular cases. It plays the

trick with everybody, and almost nobody lets it stand as a plea for the individual. Here is Jorian, and you, my son, and perhaps your aunt Dorothy, and upon my word, I think I have numbered all I know—or, ay, Sukey Sampleman, I should not omit her in an honourable list—and that makes positively all I know who would commiserate a man touched on the shoulder by a sheriff's officer—not that such an indignity is any longer done to me.'

'I hope we have seen the last of Shylock's great-grandnephew,' said I emphatically.

'Merely to give you the instance, Richie. Ay! I hope so, I hope so! But it is the nature of money that you never can tell if the boarding 's sound, once be dependent upon it. But this is talk for tradesmen.'

Thinking it so myself, I had not attempted to discover the source of my father's income. Such as it was, it was paid half-yearly, and spent within a month of the receipt, for the most signal proof possible of its shameful insufficiency. Thus ten months of the year at least he lived protesting, and many with him, compulsorily. For two months he was a brilliant man. I penetrated his mystery enough to abstain from questioning him, and enough to determine that on my coming of age he should cease to be a pensioner, petitioner, and adventurer. He aimed at a manifest absurdity.

In the meantime, after the lesson I had received as to the nature of money, I saw with some alarm my father preparing to dig a great pit for it. He had no doubt performed wonders. Despite of scandal and tattle, and the deadly report of a penniless fortune-hunter having fascinated the young heiress, he commanded an entrance to the receptions of both the rival ladies dominant. These ladies, Lady Wilts and Lady Denewdney, who moved each in her select half-circle, and could heretofore

be induced by none to meet in a common centre, had pledged themselves to honour with their presence a ball he proposed to give to the choice world here assembled on a certain illuminated day of the calendar.

'So I have now possession of Bath, Richie,' said he, twinkling to propitiate me, lest I should suspect him of valuing his achievements highly. He had, he continued, promised Hickson of the Fourth Estate, that he would, before leaving the place, do his utmost to revive the ancient glories of Bath: Bath had once set the fashion to the kingdom; why not again? I might have asked him, why at all, or why at his expense; but his lead was irresistible. Captain DeWitt and his valet, and I, and a score of ladies, scores of tradesmen, were rushing, reluctant or not, on a torrent. My part was to show that I was an athlete, and primarily that I could fence and shoot. 'It will do no harm to let it be known,' said DeWitt. He sat writing letters incessantly. My father made the tour of his fair stewardesses from noon to three, after receiving in audience his jewellers, linen-drapers, carpenters, confectioners, from nine in the morning till twelve. At three o'clock business ceased. Workmen then applying to him for instructions were despatched to the bar of the hotel, bearing the recommendation to the barmaid not to supply them refreshment if they had ever in their lives been seen drunk. At four he dressed for afternoon parade. Nor could his enemy have said that he was not the chief voice and eye along his line of march. His tall full figure maintained a superior air without insolence, and there was a leaping beam in his large blue eyes, together with the signification of movement coming to his kindly lips, such as hardly ever failed to waken smiles of greeting. People smiled and bowed, and forgot their curiosity, forgot even to be critical, while he was in sight. I can say this, for I was acutely critical of their

bearing; the atmosphere of the place was never perfectly pleasing to me.

My attitude of watchful reserve, and my reputation as the heir of immense wealth, tended possibly to constrain a certain number of the inimical party to be ostensibly civil. Lady Wilts, who did me the honour to patronize me almost warmly, complimented me on my manner of backing him, as if I were the hero; but I felt his peculiar charm; she partly admitted it, making a whimsical mouth, saying, in allusion to Miss Penrhys, 'I, you know, am past twenty. At twenty forty is charming; at forty twenty.'

Where I served him perhaps was in showing my resolution to protect him: he had been insulted before my arrival. The male relatives of Miss Penrhys did not repeat the insult; they went to Lady Wilts and groaned over their hard luck in not having the option of fighting me. I was, in her phrase, a new piece on the board, and checked them. Thus, if they provoked a challenge from me, they brought the destructive odour of powder about the headstrong creature's name. I was therefore of use to him so far. I leaned indolently across the rails of the promenade while she bent and chattered in his ear, and her attendant cousin and cavalier chewed vexation in the form of a young mustachio's curl. His horse fretted; he murmured deep notes, and his look was savage; but he was bound to wait on her, and she would not go until it suited her pleasure. She introduced him to me—as if conversation could be carried on between two young men feeling themselves simply pieces on the board, one giving check, and the other chafing under it! I need not say that I disliked my situation. It was worse when my father took to bowing to her from a distance, unobservant of her hand's prompt pull at the reins as soon as she saw him. Lady Wilts had assumed the right of

a woman still possessing attractions to exert her influence with him on behalf of the family, for I had done my best to convince her that he entertained no serious thought of marrying, and decidedly would not marry without my approval. He acted on her advice to discourage the wilful girl.

'How is it I am so hateful to you?' Miss Penrhys accosted me abruptly. I fancied she must have gone mad, and an interrogative frown was my sole answer.

'Oh! I hear that you pronounce me everywhere unendurable,' she continued. 'You are young, and you misjudge me in some way, and I should be glad if you knew me better. By-and-by, in Wales.—Are you fond of mountain scenery? We might be good friends; my temper is not bad—at least, I hope not. Heaven knows what one's relatives think of one. Will you visit us? I hear you have promised your confidante, Lady Wilts.'

At a dancing party where we met, she was thrown on my hands by her ungovernable vehemence, and I, as I had told Lady Wilts, not being able to understand the liking of twenty for forty (fifty would have been nearer the actual mark, or sixty), offered her no lively sympathy. I believe she had requested my father to pay public court to her. If Captain DeWitt was to be trusted, she desired him to dance, and dance with her exclusively, and so confirm and defy the tattle of the town; but my father hovered between the dowagers. She in consequence declined to dance, which was the next worse thing she could do. An aunt, a miserable woman, was on her left; on her right she contrived, too frequently for my peace of mind, to reserve a vacant place for me, and she eyed me intently across the room, under her persistent brows, until perforce I was drawn to her side. I had to listen to a repetition of sharp queries and replies, and affect a flattered gaiety, feeling myself most

uncomfortably, as Captain DeWitt (who watched us) said, Chip the son of Block the father. By fixing the son beside her, she defeated the father's scheme of coldness, and made it appear a concerted piece of policy. Even I saw that. I saw more than I grasped. Love for my father was to my mind a natural thing, a proof of taste and goodness; women might love him; but the love of a young girl with the morning's mystery about her! and for my progenitor!—a girl (as I reflected in the midst of my interjections) well-built, clear-eyed, animated, clever, with soft white hands and pretty feet; how could it be? She was sombre as a sunken fire until he at last came round to her, and then her sudden vivacity was surprising.

Affairs were no further advanced when I had to obey the squire's commands and return to Riversley, missing the night of the grand ball with no profound regret, except for my father's sake. He wrote soon after one of his characteristic letters, to tell me that the ball had been a success. Immediately upon this announcement, he indulged luxurious reflections, as his manner was:—

'To have stirred up the old place and given it something to dream of for the next half century, is a satisfaction, Richie. I have a kindness for Bath. I leave it with its factions reconciled, its tea-tables furnished with inexhaustible supplies of the chief thing necessary, and the persuasion firmly established in my own bosom that it is impossible to revive the past, so we must march with the age. And let me add, all but every one of the bills happily discharged, to please you. Pray, fag at your German. If (as I myself confess to) you have enjoyment of old ways, habits, customs, and ceremonies, look to Court life. It is only in Courts that a man may now air a leg; and there the women are works of Art. If you

are deficient in calves (which my boy, thank heaven! will never be charged with) you are there found out, and in fact every deficiency, every qualification, is at once in patent exhibition at a Court. I fancy Parliament for you still, and that is no impediment as a step. Jorian would have you sit and wallow in ease, and buy (by the way, we might think of it) a famous Burgundy vineyard (for an investment), devote the prime of your life to the discovery of a cook, your manhood to perfect the creature's education—so forth; I imagine you are to get five years of ample gratification (a promise hardly to be relied on) in the sere leaf, and so perish. Take poor Jorian for an example of what the absence of ambition brings men to. I treasure Jorian, I hoard the poor fellow, to have him for a lesson to my boy. Witty and shrewd, and a masterly tactician (I wager he would have won his spurs on the field of battle), you see him now living for one hour of the day—absolutely twenty-three hours of the man's life are chained slaves, beasts of burden, to the four-and-twentieth! So, I repeat, fag at your German.

'Miss Penrhys retires to her native Wales; Jorian and I on to London, to the Continent. Plinlimmon guard us all! I send you our local newspapers. That I cut entre-chats is false. It happens to be a thing I could do, and not an Englishman in England except myself; only I did not do it. I did appear in what I was educated to believe was the evening suit of a gentleman, and I cannot perceive the immodesty of showing my leg. A dress that is not indecent, and is becoming to me, and is the dress of my fathers, I wear, and I impose it on the generation of my sex. However, I dined Hickson of the Fourth Estate (Jorian considers him hungry enough to eat up his twentieth before he dies—I forget the wording of the *mot*), that he might know I was without rancour in the end, as originally I had been without any

intention of purchasing his allegiance. He offered me his columns; he wished me luck with the heiress; by his Gods, he swore he worshipped entrechats, and held a silk leg the most admirable work of the manufactures. "Sir, you 're a gentleman," says he; "you 're a nobleman, sir; you 're a prince, you 're a star of the first magnitude." Cries Jorian, "Retract that, scum! you see nothing large but what you dare to think neighbours you," and quarrels the inebriate dog. And this is the maker and destroyer of reputations in his day! I study Hickson as a miraculous engine of the very simplest contrivance; he is himself the epitome of a verdict on his period. Next day he disclaimed in his opposition penny sheet the report of the entrechats, and "the spectators laughing consumedly," and sent me (as I had requested him to do) the names of his daughters, to whom I transmit little comforting presents, for if they are nice children such a parent must afflict them.

'Cultivate Lady Wilts. You have made an impression. She puts you forward as a good specimen of our young men. 'Hem! madam.

'But, my dear boy, as I said, we cannot revive the past. I acknowledge it. Bath rebukes my last fit of ambition, and the experience is very well worth the expense. You have a mind, Richie, for discussing outlay, upon which I congratulate you, so long as you do not overlook equivalents. The system of the world is barter varied by robbery. Show that you have something in hand, and you enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you were not robbed. I pledge you my word to it —I shall not repeat Bath. And mark you, an heiress is never compromised. I am not, I hope, responsible for every creature caught up in my circle of attraction. Believe me, dear boy, I should consult you, and another one, estimable beyond mortal speech! if I had become

involved—impossible! No; I am free of all fresh chains, because of the old ones. Years will not be sufficient for us when you and I once begin to talk in earnest, when I open! To resume—so I leave Bath with a light conscience. Mixed with pleasant recollections is the transient regret that you were not a spectator of the meeting of the Wilts and Denewdney streams. Jorian compared them to the Rhone and the—I forget the name of the river below Geneva—dirtyish; for there was a transparent difference in the Denewdney style of dress, and did I choose it I could sit and rule those two factions as despotically as Buonaparte his Frenchmen. Ask me what I mean by scaling billows, Richie. I will some day tell you. I have done it all my life, and here I am. But I thank heaven I have a son I love, and I can match him against the best on earth, and henceforward I live for him, to vindicate and right the boy, and place him in his legitimate sphere. From this time I take to looking exclusively forward, and I labour diligently. I have energies.

'Not to boast, darling old son, I tell truth; I am only happy when my heart is beating near you. Here comes the mother in me pumping up. Adieu. Lebe wohl. The German!—the German!—may God in his Barmherzigkeit!—Tell her I never encouraged the girl, have literally nothing to trace a temporary wrinkle on my forehead as regards conscience. I say, may it please Providence to make you a good German scholar by the day of your majority. Hurrah for it! Present my humble warm respects to your aunt Dorothy. I pray to heaven nightly for one of its angels on earth. Kunst, Wissenschaft, Ehre, Liebe. Die Liebe. Quick at the German poets. Frau: Fräulein. I am actually dazzled at the prospect of our future. To be candid, I no longer see to write. Grüss' dich herzlich. From Vienna to you next. Lebe wohl!'

My aunt Dorothy sent a glance at the letter while I was folding it, evidently thinking my unwillingness to offer it a sign of bad news or fresh complications. She spoke of Miss Penrhys.

'Oh! that 's over,' said I. 'Heiresses soon get consoled.'

She accused me of having picked up a vulgar idea. I maintained that it was my father's.

'It cannot be your father's,' said she softly; and on affirming that he had uttered it and written it, she replied in the same tone, more effective than the ordinary language of conviction, 'He does not think it.'

The rage of a youth to prove himself in the right of an argument was insufficient to make me lay the letter out before other eyes than my own, and I shrank from exposing it to compassionate gentle eyes that would have pleaded similar allowances to mine for the wildness of the style. I should have thanked, but despised the intelligence of one who framed my excuses for my father, just as the squire, by abusing him, would have made me a desperate partisan in a minute. The vitality of the delusion I cherished was therefore partly extinct; not so the love; yet the love of him could no longer shake itself free from oppressive shadows.

Out of his circle of attraction books were my resource.

CHAPTER XXIII

MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY

Books and dreams, like the two rivers cited by my father, flowed side by side in me without mixing; and which the bright Rhone was, which the brown Arve, needs not to be

told to those who know anything of youth; they were destined to intermingle soon enough. I read well, for I felt ground and had mounting views; the real world, and the mind and passions of the world, grew visible to me. My tutor pleased the squire immensely by calling me matter-of-fact. In philosophy and history I hated speculation; but nothing was too fantastic for my ideas of possible occurrences. Once away from books, I carried a head that shot rockets to the farthest hills.

My dear friend Temple was at sea, or I should have had one near me to detect and control the springs of nonsense. I was deemed a remarkably quiet sober thoughtful young man, acquiescent in all schemes projected for my welfare. The squire would have liked to see me courting the girl of his heart, as he termed Janet Ilchester, a little more demonstratively. We had, however, come to the understanding that I was to travel before settling. Traditional notions of the importance of the Grand Tour in the education of gentlemen led him to consent to my taking a year on the Continent accompanied by my tutor. He wanted some one, he said, to represent *him* when I was out over there; which signified that he wanted some one to keep my father in check; but as the Rev. Ambrose Peterborough, successor to the Rev. Simon Hart, was hazy and manageable, I did not object. Such faith had the quiet thoughtful young man at Riversley in the convulsions of the future, the whirlwinds and whirlpools spinning for him and all connected with him, that he did not object to hear his name and Janet's coupled, though he had not a spark of love for her.

I tried to realize to myself the general opinion that she was handsome. Her eyebrows were thick and level and long; her eyes direct in their gaze, of a flinty blue, with dark lashes; her nose firm, her lips fullish, firm when

joined; her shape straight, moderately flexible. But she had no softness; she could admire herself in my presence; she claimed possession of me openly, and at the same time openly provoked a siege from the remainder of my sex: she was not maidenly. She caught imagination by the sleeve, and shut it between square whitewashed walls. Heriot thought her not only handsome, but comparable to Mrs. William Bulsted, our Julia Rippenger of old. At his meeting with Julia, her delicious loss of colour made her seem to me one of the loveliest women on earth. Janet never lost colour, rarely blushed; she touched neither nerve nor fancy.

'You want a rousing coquette,' said Heriot; 'you won't be happy till you 've been racked by that nice instrument of torture, and the fair Bulsted will do it for you if you like. You don't want a snake or a common serpent, you want a Python.'

I wanted bloom and mystery, a woman shifting like the light with evening and night and dawn, and sudden fire. Janet was bald to the heart inhabiting me then, as if quite shaven. She could speak her affectionate mind as plain as print, and it was dull print facing me, not the arches of the sunset. Julia had only to lisp, 'my husband,' to startle and agitate me beyond expression. She said simple things—'I slept well last night,' or 'I dreamed,' or 'I shivered,' and plunged me headlong down impenetrable forests. The mould of her mouth to a reluctant 'No,' and her almost invariable drawing in of her breath with a 'Yes,' surcharged the everyday monosyllables with meanings of life and death. At last I was reduced to tell her, seeing that she reproached my coldness for Janet, how much I wished Janet resembled her. Her Irish eyes lightened: 'Me! Harry'; then they shadowed: 'She is worth ten of me.' Such pathetic humility tempted me to exalt her supremely.

I talked like a boy, feeling like a man: she behaved like a woman, blushing like a girl.

'Julia! I can never call you Mrs. Bulsted.'

'You have an affection for my husband, have you not, Harry?'

Of a season when this was adorable language to me, the indication is sufficient. Riding out perfectly crazed by it, I met Kiomi, and transferred my emotions. The squire had paid her people an annual sum to keep away from our neighbourhood, while there was a chance of my taking to gipsy life. They had come back to their old camping-ground, rather dissatisfied with the squire.

'Speak to him yourself, Kiomi,' said I; 'whatever you ask for, he can't refuse anything to such eyes as yours.'

'You!' she rallied me; 'why can't you talk sensible stuff!'

She had grown a superb savage, proof against weather and compliments. Her face was like an Egyptian sky fronting night. The strong old Eastern blood put ruddy flame for the red colour; tawny olive edged from the red; rare vivid yellow, all but amber. The light that first looks down upon the fallen sun was her complexion above the brows, and round the cheeks, the neck's nape, the throat, and the firm bosom prompt to lift and sink with her vigour of speech, as her eyes were to flash and darken. Meeting her you swore she was the personification of wandering Asia. There was no question of beauty and grace, for these have laws. The curve of her brows broke like a beaten wave; the lips and nostrils were wide, tragic in repose. But when she laughed she illuminated you; where she stepped she made the earth hers. She was as fresh of her East as the morning when her ancient people struck tents in the track of their shadows. I write of her in the style consonant to my ideas of her at

the time. I would have carried her off on the impulse and lived her life, merely to have had such a picture moving in my sight, and call it mine.

'You 're not married?' I said, ludicrously faintly.

'I 've not seen the man I 'd marry,' she answered, grinning scorn.

The prizefighter had adopted drinking for his pursuit; one of her aunts was dead, and she was in quest of money to bury the dead woman with the conventional ceremonies and shows of respect dear to the hearts of gipsies, whose sense of propriety and adherence to customs are a sentiment indulged by them to a degree unknown to the stabled classes. In fact, they have no other which does not come under the definite title of pride;—pride in their physical prowess, their dexterity, ingenuity, and tricksiness, and their purity of blood. Kiomi confessed she had hoped to meet me; confessed next that she had been waiting to jump out on me: and next that she had sat in a tree watching the Grange yesterday for six hours; and all for money to do honour to her dead relative, poor little soul! Heriot and I joined the decent procession to the grave. Her people had some quarrel with the Durstan villagers, and she feared the scandal of being pelted on the way to the church. I knew that nothing of the sort would happen if I was present. Kiomi walked humbly with her head bent, leaving me the thick rippling coarse black locks of her hair for a mark of observation. We were entertained at her camp in the afternoon. I saw no sign of intelligence between her and Heriot. On my asking her, the day before, if she remembered him, she said, 'I do, I 'm dangerous for that young man.' Heriot's comment on her was impressed on me by his choosing to call her 'a fine doe leopard,' and maintaining that it was a defensible phrase.

She was swept from my amorous mind by Mabel

Sweetwinter, the miller's daughter of Dipwell. This was a Saxon beauty in full bud, yellow as mid-May, with the eyes of opening June. Beauty, you will say, is easily painted in that style. But the sort of beauty suits the style, and the well-worn comparisons express the well-known type. Beside Kiomi she was like a rich meadow on the border of the heaths.

We saw them together on my twenty-first birthday. To my shame I awoke in the early morning at Riversley, forgetful of my father's old appointment for the great Dipwell feast. Not long after sunrise, when blackbirds peck the lawns, and swallows are out from under eaves to the flood's face, I was hailed by Janet Ilchester beneath my open windows. I knew she had a bet with the squire that she would be the first to hail me legal man, and was prepared for it. She sat on horseback alone in the hazy dewy Midsummer morning, giving clear note: 'Whoop! Harry Richmond! halloo!' To which I tossed her a fox's brush, having a jewelled bracelet pendant. She missed it and let it lie, and laughed.

'No, no; it 's foxie himself!—anybody may have the brush. You 're dressed, are you, Harry? You were sure I should come? A thousand happy years to you, and me to see them, if you don't mind. I 'm first to wish it, I 'm certain. I was awake at three, out at half-past, over Durstan heath, across Eckerthy's fields—we 'll pay the old man for damage—down by the plantation, Bran and Sailor at my heels, and here I am. Crow, cocks! bark, dogs! up, larks! I said I 'd be first. And now I 'm round to stables to stir up Uberly. Don't be tardy, Mr. Harry, and we 'll be Commodore Anson and his crew before the world 's awake.'

We rode out for a couple of hours, and had to knock at a farmhouse for milk and bread. Possibly a sense of independence, owing to the snatching of a meal in mid

flight away from home, made Janet exclaim that she would gladly be out all day. Such freaks were exceedingly to my taste. Then I remembered Dipwell, and sure that my father would be there, though he had not written of it, I proposed to ride over. She pleaded for the horses and the squire alternately. Feasting was arranged at Riversley, as well as at Dipwell, and she said musically,—

'Harry, the squire is a very old man, and you may not have many more chances of pleasing him. To-day do, do! To-morrow, ride to your father, if you must: of course you must if you think it right; but don't go this day.'

'Not upset my fortune, Janet?'

'Don't hurt the kind old man's heart to-day.'

'Oh! you 're the girl of his heart, I know.'

'Well, Harry, you have first place, and I want you to keep it.'

'But here 's an oath I 've sworn to my father.'

'He should not have exacted it, I think.'

'I promised him when I was a youngster.'

'Then be wiser now, Harry.'

'You have brilliant ideas of the sacredness of engagements.'

'I think I have common sense, that 's all.'

'This is a matter of feeling.'

'It seems that you forgot it, though!'

Kiomi's tents on Durstan heath rose into view. I controlled my verbal retort upon Janet to lead her up to the gipsy girl, for whom she had an odd aversion, dating from childhood. Kiomi undertook to ride to Dipwell, a distance of thirty miles, and carry the message that I would be there by nightfall. Tears were on Janet's resolute face as we cantered home.

After breakfast the squire introduced me to his lawyer, Mr. Burgin, who, closeted alone with me, said formally,—

'Mr. Harry Richmond, you are Squire Beltham's grandson, his sole male descendant, and you are established at present, and as far as we can apprehend for the future, as the direct heir to the whole of his property, which is enormous now, and likely to increase so long as he lives. You may not be aware that your grandfather has a most sagacious eye for business. Had he not been born a rich man he would still have been one of our very greatest millionaires. He has rarely invested but to double his capital; never speculated but to succeed. He may not understand men quite so well, but then he trusts none entirely; so if there is a chasm in his intelligence, there is a bridge thrown across it. The metaphor is obscure perhaps: you will doubtless see my meaning. He knows how to go on his road without being cheated. For himself, your grandfather, Mr. Harry, is the soul of honour. Now, I have to explain certain family matters. The squire's wife, your maternal grandmother, was a rich heiress. Part of her money was settled on her to descend to her children by reversion upon her death. What she herself possessed she bequeathed to them in reversion likewise to their children. Thus at your maternal grandmother's death, your mother and your aunt inherited money to use as their own, and the interest of money tied fast in reversion to their children (in case of marriage) after their death. Your grandfather, as your natural guardian, has left the annual interest of your money to accumulate, and now you are of age he hands it to you, as you see, without much delay. Thus you become this day the possessor of seventy thousand pounds, respecting the disposal of which I am here to take your orders. Ahem!—as to the remaining property of your mother's —the sum held by her for her own use, I mean, it devolved to her husband, your father, who, it is probable, will furnish you an account of it—ah!—at his leisure—ah!

um! And now, in addition, Mr. Harry, I have the squire's commands to speak to you as a man of business, on what may be deemed a delicate subject, though from the business point of view no peculiar delicacy should pertain to it. Your grandfather will settle on you estates and money to the value of twenty thousand pounds per annum on the day of your union with a young lady in this district, Miss Janet Ilchester. He undertakes likewise to provide her pin-money. Also, let me observe, that it is his request—but he makes no stipulation of it—that you will ultimately assume the name of Beltham, subscribing yourself Harry Lepel Richmond Beltham; or, if it pleases you, Richmond-Beltham, with the junction hyphen. Needless to say, he leaves it to your decision. And now, Mr. Harry, I have done, and may most cordially congratulate you on the blessings it has pleased a kind and discerning Providence to shower on your head.'

None so grimly ironical as the obsequious! I thought of Burgin's 'discerning' providence (he spoke with all professional sincerity) in after days.

On the occasion I thought of nothing but the squire's straightforwardness, and grieved to have to wound him. Janet helped me. She hinted with a bashfulness, quite new to her, that I must go through some ceremony. Guessing what it was, I saluted her on the cheek. The squire observed that a kiss of that sort might as well have been planted on her back hair. 'But,' said he, and wisely, 'I 'd rather have the girl worth ten of you, than you be more than her match. Girls like my girl here are precious.' Owing to her intercession, he winked at my departure after I had done duty among the tenants; he barely betrayed his vexation, and it must have been excessive.

Heriot and I rode over to Dipwell. Next night we rode back by moonlight with matter for a year of laughter,

singing like two Arabian poets praises of dark and fair, challengeing one to rival the other. Kiomi! Mabel! we shouted separately. We had just seen the dregs of the last of the birthday Burgundy.

'Kiomi! what a splendid panther she is!' cries Heriot; and I: 'Teeth and claws, and a skin like a burnt patch on a common! Mabel 's like a wonderful sunflower.'

'Butter and eggs! old Richie, and about as much fire as a rushlight. If the race were Fat she 'd beat the world.'

'Heriot, I give you my word of honour, the very look of her 's eternal Summer. Kiomi rings thin—she tinkles; it 's the difference between metal and flesh.'

'Did she tinkle, as you call it, when that fellow Destrier, confound him! touched her?'

'The little cat! Did you notice Mabel's blush?'

'How could I help it? We 've all had a dozen apiece. You saw little Kiomi curled up under the hop and briony?'

'I took her for a dead jackdaw.'

'I took her for what she is, and she may slap, scream, tear, and bite, I 'll take her yet—and all her tribe crying thief, by way of a diversion. She and I are footed a pair.'

His impetuosity surpassed mine so much that I fell to brooding on the superior image of my charmer. The result was, I could not keep away from her. I managed to get home with leaden limbs. Next day I was back at Dipwell.

Such guilt as I have to answer for I may avow. I made violent love to this silly country beauty, and held every advantage over her other flatterers. She had met me on the evening of the great twenty-first, she and a line of damsels dressed in white and wearing wreaths, and I had claimed the privilege of saluting her. The chief superintendent of the festivities, my father's old cook, Monsieur

Alphonse, turned twilight into noonday with a sheaf of rockets at the moment my lips brushed her cheek. It was a kiss marred; I claimed to amend it. Besides, we had been bosom friends in childhood. My wonder at the growth of the rose I had left but an insignificant thorny shoot was exquisite natural flattery, sweet reason, to which she could not say nonsense. At each step we trod on souvenirs, innocent in themselves, had they recurred to childish minds. The whisper, 'Hark! it 's sunset, Mabel, Martha Thresher calls,' clouded her face with stormy sunset colours. I respected Martha even then for boldly speaking to me on the girl's behalf. Mrs. Waddy's courage failed. John Thresher and Mark Sweetwinter were overcome by my father's princely prodigality; their heads were turned, they appeared to have assumed that I could do no wrong. To cut short the episode, some one wrote to the squire in uncouth English, telling him I was courting a country lass, and he at once started me for the Continent. We had some conversation on money before parting. The squire allowed me a thousand a year, independent of my own income. He counselled prudence, warned me that I was on my trial, and giving me his word of honour that he should not spy into my Bank accounts, desired me to be worthy of the trust reposed in me. Speculation he forbade. I left him satisfied with the assurance that I meant to make my grand tour neither as a merchant, a gambler, nor a rake, but simply as a plain English gentleman.

'There 's nothing better in the world than that,' said he.

Arrived in London, I left my travelling companion, the Rev. Ambrose Peterborough, sipping his Port at the hotel, and rushed down to Dipwell, shot a pebble at Mabel's window by morning twilight, and soon had her

face at the casement. But it was a cloudy and rain-beaten face. She pointed toward the farm, saying that my father was there.

'Has he grieved you, Mabel?' I asked softly.

'Oh, no, not he! he wouldn't, he couldn't; he talked right. Oh, go, go: for I haven't a foot to move. And don't speak so soft; I can't bear kindness.'

My father in admonishing her had done it tenderly, I was sure. Tenderness was the weapon which had wounded her, and so she shrank from it; and if I had reproached and abused her she might, perhaps, have obeyed me by coming out, not to return. She was deaf. I kissed my hand to her regretfully; a condition of spirit gradually dissolved by the haunting phantom of her forehead and mouth crumpling up for fresh floods of tears. Had she concealed that vision with her handkerchief, I might have waited to see her before I saw my father. He soon changed the set of the current.

'Our little Mabel here,' he said, 'is an inflammable puss, I fear. By the way, talking of girls, I have a surprise for you. Remind me of it when we touch Ostend. We may want a yacht there to entertain high company. I have set inquiries afloat for the hire of a schooner. This child Mabel can read and write, I suppose? Best write no letters, boy. Do not make old Dipwell a thorny bed. I have a portrait to show you, Richie. A portrait! I think you will say the original was worthy of more than to be taken up and thrown away like a weed. You see, Richie, girls have only one chance in the world, and good God! to ruin that—no, no. You shall see this portrait. A pretty little cow-like Mabel, I grant you. But to have her on the conscience! What a coronet to wear! My young Lord Destrier—you will remember him as one of our guests here; I brought him to make your acquaintance; well, *he* would not be scrupulous, it is possible.

Ay, but compare yourself with him, Richie! and you and I, let us love one another and have no nettles.'

He flourished me away to London, into new spheres of fancy. He was irresistible.

In a London Club I was led up to the miniature of a youthful woman, singular for her endearing beauty. Her cheeks were merry red, her lips lively with the spark of laughter, her eyes in good union with them, showing you the laughter was gentle; eyes of overflowing blue light.

'Who is she?' I asked.

The old-fashioned building of the powdered hair counselled me to add, 'Who was she?'

Captain DeWitt, though a member of the Club, seemed unable to inform me. His glance consulted my father. He hummed and drawled, and said: 'Mistress Anastasia Dewsbury; that was her name.'

'She does not look a grandmother,' said my father.

'She would be one by this time, I dare say,' said I.

We gazed in silence.

'Yes!' he sighed. 'She was a charming actress, and one of the best of women. A noble-minded young woman! A woman of cultivation and genius! Do you see a broken heart in that face? No? Very well. A walk will take us to her grave. She died early.'

I was breathing 'Who?' when he said, 'She was my mother, my dear.'

It was piteous.

We walked to an old worn flat stone in a London street, whereunder I had to imagine those features of beautiful humanity lying shut from us.

She had suffered in life miserably.

CHAPTER XXIV

I MEET THE PRINCESS

HEARING that I had not slept at the hotel, the Rev. Ambrose rushed down to Riversley with melancholy ejaculations, and was made to rebound by the squire's contemptuous recommendation to him to learn to know something of the spirit of young bloods, seeing that he had the nominal charge of one, and to preach his sermon in secret, if he would be sermonizing out of church. The good gentleman had not exactly understood his duties, or how to conduct them. Far from objecting to find me in company with my father, as he would otherwise have done by transmitting information of that fact to Riversley, he now congratulated himself on it, and after the two had conversed apart, cordially agreed to our scheme of travelling together. The squire had sickened him. I believe that by comparison he saw in my father a better friend of youth.

'We shall not be the worse for a ghostly adviser at hand,' my father said to me with his quaintest air of gravity and humour mixed, which was not insincerely grave, for the humour was unconscious. 'An accredited casuist may frequently be a treasure. And I avow it, I like to travel with my private chaplain.'

Mr. Peterborough's temporary absence had allowed me time for getting ample funds placed at our disposal through the agency of my father's solicitors, Messrs. Dettermain and Newson, whom I already knew from certain transactions with them on his behalf. They were profoundly courteous to me, and showed me his box, and alluded to his Case—a long one, and a lamentable, I was taught to apprehend, by their lugubriously

professional tone about it. The question was naturally prompted in me, 'Why do you not go on with it?'

'Want of funds.'

'There 's no necessity to name that now,' I insisted. But my father desired them to postpone any further exposition of the case, saying, 'Pleasure first, business by-and-by. That, I take it, is in the order of our great mother Nature, gentlemen. I will not have him help shoulder his father's pack until he has had his fill of entertainment.'

A smooth voyage brought us in view of the towers of Ostend at sunrise. Standing with my father on deck, and gazing on this fringe of the grand romantic Continent, I remembered our old travels, and felt myself bound to him indissolubly, ashamed of my recent critical probings of his character. My boy's love for him returned in full force. I was sufficiently cognizant of his history to know that he kept his head erect, lighted by the fire of his robust heart in the thick of overhanging natal clouds. As the way is with men when they are too happy to be sentimental, I chattered of anything but my feelings.

'What a capital idea that was of yours to bring down old Alphonse to Dipwell! You should have heard old John Thresher and Mark Sweetwinter and the others grumbling at the interference of "French frogs;" with their beef, though Alphonse vowed he only ordered the ox to be turned faster, and he dressed their potatoes in six different ways. I doubt if Dipwell has composed itself yet. You know I sat for president in their tent while the beef went its first round; and Alphonse was in an awful hurry to drag me into what he called the royal tent. By the way, you should have hauled the standard down at sunset.'

'Not when the *son* had not come down among us,' said my father, smiling.

'Well, I forgot to tell you about Alphonse. By the way, we 'll have him in our service. There was he plucking at me: "Monsieur Henri-Richie, Monsieur Henri-Richie! mille complimens . . . et les potages, Monsieur! —à la Camérani, à la tortue, aux petits pois . . . c'est en vrai artiste que j'ai su tout retarder jusqu'au dernier moment. . . . Monsieur! cher Monsieur Henri-Richie, je vous en supplie, laissez-là ces planteurs de choux." And John Thresher, as spokesman for the rest: "Master Harry, we beg to say, in my name, we can't masticate comfortably while we 've got a notion Mr. Frenchman he 's present here to play his Frenchified tricks with our plain wholesome dishes. Our opinion is, he don't know beef from hedgehog; and let him trim 'em, and egg 'em, and bread-crumb 'em, and pound the mess all his might, and then tak' and roll 'em into balls, we say we wun't, for we can't make English muscle out o' that."—And Alphonse, quite indifferent to the vulgar: "Hé! mais pensez donc au Papa, Monsieur Henri-Richie, sans doute il a une santé de fer: mais encore faut-il lui ménager le suc gastrique, pancréatique. . . . ."'

'Ay, ay!' laughed my father; 'what sets you thinking of Alphonse?'

'I suppose because I shall have to be speaking French in an hour.'

'German, Richie, German.'

'But these Belgians speak French.'

'Such French as it is. You will, however, be engaged in a German conversation first, I suspect.'

'Very well, I 'll stumble on. I don't much like it.'

'In six hours from this second of time, Richie, boy, I undertake to warrant you fonder of the German tongue than of any other spoken language.'

I looked at him. He gave me a broad pleasant smile, without sign of a jest lurking in one corner.

The scene attracted me. Laughing fishwife faces radiant with sea-bloom in among the weedy pier-piles, and sombre blue-cheeked officers of the douane, with their double row of buttons extending the breadth of their shoulders. My father won Mr. Peterborough's approval by declaring cigars which he might easily have passed.

'And now, sir,'—he used the commanding unction of a lady's doctor,—'you to bed, and a short repose. We will, if it pleases you, breakfast at eight. I have a surprise for Mr. Richie. We are about to beat the drum in the market-place, and sing out for echoes.'

'Indeed, sir?' said the simple man.

'I promise you we shall not disturb you, Mr. Peterborough. You have reached that middle age, have you not, when sleep is, so to put it, your capital? And your bodily and mental activity is the interest you draw from it to live on. You have three good hours. So, then, till we meet at the breakfast-table.'

My father's first proceeding at the hotel was to examine the list of visitors. He questioned one of the waiters aside, took information from him, and seized my arm rather tremulously, saying,—

'They are here. 'Tis as I expected. And she is taking the morning breath of sea-air on the dunes. Come, Richie, come.'

'Who 's the "she"?' I asked incuriously.

'Well, she is young, she is of high birth, she is charming. We have a crowned head or two here. I observe in you, Richie, an extraordinary deficiency of memory. She has had an illness; Neptune speed her recovery! Now for a turn at our German. Die Strassen ruhen; die Stadt schläft; aber dort, siehst Du, dort liegt das blaue Meer, das nimmer-schlafende! She is gazing on it, and breathing it, Richie. Ach! ihr jauchzende Seejungfern. On my soul, I expect to see the very loveliest of her sex!

You must not be dismayed at pale cheeks—blasse Wangen. Her illness has been alarming. Why, this air is the top of life; it will, and it shall, revive her. How will she address him?—"Freund," in my presence, perchance: she has her invalid's privilege. "Theure Prinzessin" you might venture on. No ice! Ay, there she is!'

Solitary, on the long level of the sand-bank, I perceived a group that became discernible as three persons attached to an invalid's chair, moving leisurely toward us. I was in the state of mind between divination and doubt when the riddle is not impossible to read, would but the heart cease its hurry an instant; a tumbled sky where the break is coming. It came. The dear old days of my wanderings with Temple framed her face. I knew her without need of pause or retrospect. The crocus raising its cup pointed as when it pierced the earth, and the crocus stretched out on earth, wounded by frost, is the same flower. The face was the same, though the features were changed. Unaltered in expression, but wan, and the kind blue eyes large upon lean brows, her aspect was that of one who had been half caught away and still shook faintly in the relaxing invisible grasp.

We stopped at a distance of half-a-dozen paces to allow her time for recollection. She eyed us softly in a fixed manner, while the sea-wind blew her thick red-brown hair to threads on her cheek. Colour on the fair skin told us we were recognized.

'Princess Ottilia!' said my father.

'It is I, my friend,' she answered. 'And you?'

'With more health than I am in need of, dearest princess.'

'And he?'

'Harry Richmond! my son, now of age, commencing

his tour; and he has not forgotten the farewell bunch of violets.'

Her eyelids gently lifted, asking me.

'Nor the mount you did me the honour to give me on the little Hungarian,' said I.

'How nice this sea-air is!' she spoke in English. 'England and sea go together in my thoughts. And you are here! I have been down very low, near the lowest. But your good old sea makes me breathe again. I want to toss on it. Have you yet seen the Markgräfin?'

My father explained that we had just landed from the boat.

'Is our meeting, then, an accident?'

'Dear princess, I heard of your being out by the shore.'

'Ah! kind: and you walked to meet me? I love that as well, though I love chance. And it *is* chance that brings you here! I looked out on the boat from England while they were dressing me. I cannot have too much of the morning, for then I have all to myself: sea and sky and I. The night people are all asleep, and you come like an old Märchen.'

Her eyelids dropped without closing.

'Speak no more to her just at present,' said an English voice, Miss Silbey's. Schwartz, the huge dragoon, whose big black horse hung near him in my memory like a phantom, pulled the chair at a quiet pace, head downward. A young girl clad in plain black walked beside Miss Sibley, following the wheels.

'Danger is over,' Miss Sibley answered my gaze. 'She is convalescent. You see how weak she is.'

I praised the lady for what I deemed her great merit in not having quitted the service of the princess.

'Oh!' said she, 'my adieux to Sarkeld were uttered years ago. But when I heard of her fall from the horse

I went and nursed her. We were once in dread of her leaving us. She sank as if she had taken some internal injury. It may have been only the shock to her system and the cessation of her accustomed exercise. She has a little over-studied.'

'The margravine?'

'The margravine is really very good and affectionate, and has won my esteem. So you and your father are united at last? We have often talked of you. Oh! that day up by the tower. But, do you know, the statue is positively there now, and no one—no one who had the privilege of beholding the first bronze Albrecht Wohlgemuth, Fürst von Eppenwelzen-Sarkeld, no one will admit that the second is half worthy of him. I can feel to this day the leap of the heart in my mouth when the statue dismounted. The prince sulked for a month: the margravine still longer at your father's evasion. She could not make allowance for the impulsive man: such a father; *such* a son!'

'Thank you, thank you most humbly,' said I, bowing to her shadow of a mock curtsey.

The princess's hand appeared at a side of the chair. We hastened to her.

'Let me laugh, too,' she prayed.

Miss Sibley was about to reply, but stared, and delight sprang to her lips in a quick cry.

'What medicine is this? Why, the light of morning has come to you, my darling!'

'I am better, dearest, better.'

'You sigh, my own.'

'No; I breathe lots, lots of salt air now, and lift like a boat. Ask him—he had a little friend, much shorter than himself, who came the whole way with him out of true friendship—ask him where is the friend?'

Miss Sibley turned her head to me.

'Temple,' said I; 'Temple is a midshipman; he is at sea.'

'That is something to think of,' the princess murmured, and dropped her eyelids a moment. She resumed: 'The Grand Seigneur was at Vienna last year, and would not come to Sarkeld, though he knew I was ill.'

My father stooped low.

'The Grand Seigneur, your servant, dear princess, was an Ottoman Turk, and his Grand Vizier advised him to send flowers in his place weekly.'

'I had them, and when we could get those flowers nowhere else,' she replied. 'So it was you! So my friends have been about me.'

During the remainder of the walk I was on one side of the chair, and her little maid on the other, while my father to rearward conversed with Miss Sibley. The princess took a pleasure in telling me that this Aennchen of hers knew me well, and had known me before ever her mistress had seen me. Aennchen was the eldest of the two children Temple and I had eaten breakfast with in the forester's hut. I felt myself as if in the forest again, merely wondering at the growth of the trees, and the narrowness of my vision in those days.

At parting, the princess said,—

'Is my English improved? You smiled at it once. I will ask you when I meet you next.'

'It is my question,' I whispered to my own ears.

She caught the words.

'Why do you say—"It is my question"?'

I was constrained to remind her of her old forms of English speech.

'You remember that? Adieu,' she said.

My father considerately left me to carry on my promenade alone. I crossed the ground she had traversed, noting every feature surrounding it, the curving wheel-

track, the thin prickly sand-herbage, the wave-mounds, the sparse wet shells and pebbles, the gleaming flatness of the water, and the vast horizon-boundary of pale flat land level with shore, looking like a dead sister of the sea. By a careful examination of my watch and the sun's altitude, I was able to calculate what would, in all likelihood, have been his height above yonder waves when her chair was turned toward the city, at a point I reached in the track. But of the matter then simultaneously occupying my mind, to recover which was the second supreme task I proposed to myself—of what I also was thinking upon the stroke of five o'clock, I could recollect nothing. I could not even recollect whether I happened to be looking on sun and waves when she must have had them full and glorious in her face.

CHAPTER XXV

ON BOARD A YACHT

With the heartiest consent I could give, and a blank cheque, my father returned to England to hire forthwith a commodious yacht, fitted and manned. Before going he discoursed of prudence in our expenditure; though not for the sake of the mere money in hand, which was a trifle, barely more than the half of my future income; but that the squire, should he by and by bethink him of inspecting our affairs, might perceive we were not spendthrifts.

'I promised you a surprise, Richie,' said he, 'and you have had it; whether at all equal to your expectations is for you to determine. I was aware of the margravine's intention to bring the princess to these sea-sands; they

are famous on the Continent. It was bruited last Winter and Spring that she would be here in the season for bathing; so I held it likely we should meet. We have, you behold. In point of fact, we owe the good margravine some show of hospitality. The princess has a passion for tossing on the sea. To her a yacht is a thing dropped from the moon. His Highness the prince her father could as soon present her with one as with the moon itself. The illustrious Serenity's revenue is absorbed, my boy, in the state he has to support. As for his daughter's dowry, the young gentleman who anticipates getting one with her, I commend to the practise of his whistling. It will be among the sums you may count, if you are a moderate arithmetician, in groschen. The margravine's income I should reckon to approach twenty thousand per annum, and she proves her honourable sense that she holds it in trust for others by dispersing it rapidly. I fear she loves cards. So, then, I shall go and hire the yacht through Dettermain and Newson, furnish it with piano and swing-cot, etc.; and if the ladies shrink from a cruise they can have an occasional sail. Here are we at their service. I shall be seriously baffled by fortune if I am not back to you at the end of a week. You will take your early morning walk, I presume. On Sunday see that our chaplain, the excellent Mr. Peterborough, officiates for the assembled Protestants of all nations. It excites our English enthusiasm. In addition, son Richie, it is peculiarly our duty. I, at least, hold the view that it is a family duty. Think it over, Richie boy. Providence, you see, has sent us the man. As for me, I feel as if I were in the dawn of one life with all the mature experience of another. I am calm, I am perfectly unexcited, and I tell you, old son, I believe—pick among the highest—our destinies are about the most brilliant of any couple in Great Britain.'

His absence relieved me in spite of my renewed pleasure in his talk; I may call it a thirsty craving to have him inflating me, puffing the deep unillumined treasure-pits of my nature with laborious hints, as mines are filled with air to keep the miners going. While he talked he made these inmost recesses habitable. But the pain lay in my having now and then to utter replies. The task of speaking was hateful. I found a sweetness in brooding unrealizingly over hopes and dreams and possibilities, and I let him go gladly that I might enjoy a week of silence, just taking impressions as they came, like the sands in the ebb-tide. The impression of the morning was always enough for a day's meditation. The green colour and the crimson athwart it, and higher up the pinky lights, flamingo feathers, on a warm half-circle of heaven, in hue between amethyst and milky opal; then the rim of the sun's disc not yet severe; and then the monstrous shadow of tall Schwartz darting at me along the sand, then the princess. This picture, seen at sunrise, lasted till I slept. It stirred no thoughts, conjured no images, it possessed me. In the afternoon the margravine accompanied the princess to a point facing seaward, within hearing of the military band. She did me the favour to tell me that she tolerated me until I should become efficient in German to amuse her, but the dulness of the Belgian city compared with her lively German watering-places compelled her to try my powers of fun in French, and in French I had to do duty, and failed in my office.

'Do you know,' said she, 'that your honourable papa is one in a million? He has the life of a regiment in his ten fingers. What astonishes me is that he does not make fury in that England of yours—that Lapland! Je ne puis me passer de cet homme! He offends me, he trifles, he outrages, he dares permit himself to be indignant.

Bon! we part, and absence pleads for him with the eloquence of Satan. I am his victim. Does he, then, produce no stir whatever in your England? But what a people! But yes, you resemble us, as bottles bottles; seulement, you are emptied of your wine. Ce Monsieur Pétèrbooroo'! Il m'agace les nerfs. It cannot be blood in his veins. One longs to see him cuffed, to see if he has the English lion in him, one knows not where. But you are so, you English, when not intoxicated. And so censorious! You win your battles, they say, upon beer and cordials: it is why you never can follow up a success. Je tiens cela du Maréchal Prince B——. Let that pass. One groans at your intolerable tristesse. La vie en Angleterre est comme un marais. It is a scandal to human nature. It blows fogs, foul vapours, joint-stiffnesses, agues, pestilences, over us here,—yes, here! That is your best side: but your worst is too atrocious! Mon Dieu! Your men-rascals! Your women-rascals!'

'Good soul!' the princess arrested her, 'I beg that you will not abuse England.'

'Have I abused England?' exclaimed the margravine. 'Nay, then, it was because England is shockingly unjust to the most amusing, the most reviving, charming of men. There is he fresh as a green bubbling well, and those English decline to do honour to his source. Now tell me, you!' She addressed me imperiously. 'Are you prosecuting his claims? Are you besieging your Government? What! you are in the season of generosity, an affectionate son, wealthy as a Magyar prince of flocks, herds, mines, and men, and you let him stand in the shade deprived of his birthright? Are you a purse-proud commoner or an imbecile?'

'My whimsy aunt!' the princess interposed again, 'now you have taken to abusing a defenceless Englishman.'

'Nothing of the sort, child. I compliment him on his

looks and manners; he is the only one of his race who does not appear to have marched out of a sentinel's box with a pocket-mirror in his hand. I thank him from my soul for not cultivating the national cat's whisker. None can imagine what I suffer from the oppressive sight of his Monsieur Pétèrbooroo'! And they are of one pattern—the entire nation! He! no, he has the step of a trained blood-horse. Only, as Kaunitz, or somebody, said of Joseph II., or somebody, he thinks or he chews. Englishmen's mouths were clearly not made for more purposes than one. In truth, I am so utterly wearied, I could pray for the diversion of a descent of rain. The life here is as bad as in Rippau. I might just as well be in Rippau doing duty: the silly people complain, I hear. I am gathering dust. These, my dear, these are the experiences which age women at a prodigious rate. I feel chains on my limbs here.'

'Madame, I would,' said I, 'that I were the Perseus to relieve you of your monster Ennui, but he is coming quickly.'

'You see he has his pretty phrases!' cried the margravine; adding encouragingly, 'S'il n'est pas tant soit peu impertinent?'

The advance of some German or Russian nobleman spared me further efforts.

We were on shore, listening to the band in the afternoon, when a sail like a spark of pure white stood on the purple black edge of a storm-cloud. It was the yacht. By sunset it was moored off shore, and at night hung with variegated lamps. Early next morning we went on board. The ladies were astonished at the extent of the vessel, and its luxurious fittings and cunning arrangements. My father, in fact, had negotiated for the hire of the yacht some weeks previously, with his accustomed forethought.

'House and town and fortress provisioned, and moveable at will!' the margravine interjected repeatedly.

The princess was laid on raised pillows in her swing-cot under an awning aft, and watched the sailors, the splendid offspring of old sea-fights, as I could observe her spirited fancy conceiving them. They were a set of men to point to for an answer to the margravine's strictures on things English.

'Then, are you the captain, my good Herr Heilbrunn?' the margravine asked my father.

He was dressed in cheerful blue, wearing his cheerfullest air, and seemed strongly inclined for the part of captain, but presented the actual commander of the schooner-yacht, and helped him through the margravine's interrogations.

'All is excellent,—excellent for a day's sail,' she said. 'I have no doubt you could nourish my system for a month, but to deal frankly with you—prepared meats and cold pies!—to face them once is as much as I am capable of.'

'Dear Lady Field-Marshal,' returned my father, 'the sons of Neptune would be of poor account, if they could not furnish you cookery at sea.'

They did, for Alphonse was on board. He and my father had a hot discussion about the margravine's dishes, Alphonse declaring that it was against his conscience to season them pungently, and my father preaching expediency. Alphonse spoke of the artist and his duty to his art, my father of the wise diplomatist who manipulated individuals without any sacrifice of principle. They were partly at play, of course, both having humour.

It ended in the margravine's being enraptured. The delicacy of the invalid's dishes, was beyond praise. 'So, then, we are absolutely better housed and accommodated than on shore!' the margravine made her wonder heard,

and from that fell to enthusiasm for the vessel. After a couple of pleasant smooth-sailing days, she consented to cruise off the coasts of France and England. Adieu to the sands. Throughout the cruise she was placable, satisfied with earth and sea, and constantly eulogizing herself for this novel state of serenity. Cards, and a collection of tripping French books bound in yellow, danced the gavotte with time, which made the flying minutes endurable to her: and for relaxation there was here the view of a shining town dropped between green hills to dip in sea-water, yonder a ship of merchandise or war to speculate upon, trawlers, collier-brigs, sea-birds, wave over wave. No cloud on sun and moon. We had gold and silver in our track, like the believable children of fairyland.

The princess, lying in her hammock-cot on deck, both day and night, or for the greater part of the night, let her eyes feast incessantly on a laughing sea: when she turned them to any of us, pure pleasure sparkled in them. The breezy salt hours were visible ecstasy to her blood. If she spoke it was but to utter a few hurried, happy words, and shrink as you see the lightning behind a cloud-rack, suggestive of fiery swift emotion within, and she gazed away overjoyed at the swoop and plunge of the gannet, the sunny spray, the waves curling crested or down-like. At night a couple of sailors, tender as women, moved her in the cot to her cabin. We heard her voice in the dark of the morning, and her little maid Aennchen came out and was met by me; and I at that hour had the privilege to help move her back to her favourite place, and strap the iron-stand fast, giving the warm-hooded cot room to swing. The keen sensations of a return to health amid unwonted scenes made things magical to her. When she beheld our low green Devon hills she signalled for help to rise, and 'That is England!' she said, summoning to her beautiful clear eyeballs the recollection of her first

desire to see my country. Her petition was that the yacht should go in nearer and nearer to the land till she could discern men, women, and children, and their occupations. A fisherman and his wife sat in the porch above their hanging garden, the woman knitting, the man mending his nets, barefooted boys and girls astride the keel of a boat below them. The princess eyed them and wept. 'They give me happiness; I can give them nothing,' she said.

The margravine groaned impatiently at talk of such a dieaway sort.

My father sent a couple of men on shore with a gift of money to their family in the name of the Princess Ottilia. How she thanked him for his prompt ideas! 'It is because you are generous you read one well.'

She had never thanked me. I craved for that vibrating music as of her deep heart penetrated and thrilling, but shrank from grateful words which would have sounded payment. Running before the wind swiftly on a night of phosphorescent sea, when the waves opened to white hollows with frayed white ridges, wreaths of hissing silver, her eyelids closed, and her hand wandered over the silken coverlet to the hammock-cloth, and up, in a blind effort to touch. Mine joined to it. Little Aennchen was witness. Ottilia held me softly till her slumber was deep.

CHAPTER XXVI

IN VIEW OF THE HOHENZOLLERN'S BIRTHPLACE

Our cruise came to an end in time to save the margravine from yawning. The last day of it was windless, and we hung in sight of the colourless low Flemish coast for

hours, my father tasking his ingenuity to amuse her. He sang with Miss Sibley, rallied Mr. Peterborough, played picquet to lose, threw over the lead line to count the fathoms, and whistling for the breeze, said to me, 'We shall decidedly have to offer her an exhibition of tipsy British seamen as a final resource. The case is grave either way; but we cannot allow the concluding impression to be a dull one.'

It struck me with astonishment to see the vigilant watch she kept over the princess this day, after having left her almost uninterruptedly to my care.

'You are better?' She addressed Ottilia. 'You can sit up? You think you can walk? Then I have acted rightly, nay, judiciously,—I have not made a sacrifice for nothing. I took the cruise, mind you, on your account. You would study yourself to the bone, till you looked like a canary's quill, with that Herr Professor of yours. Now I 've given you a dose of life. Yes, you begin to look like human flesh. Something has done you good.'

The princess flushing scarlet, the margravine cried,—

'There 's no occasion for you to have the whole British army in your cheeks. Goodness me! what 's the meaning of it? Why, you answer me like flags, banners, uhlans' pennons, full-frocked cardinals!'

My father stepped in.

'Ah, yes,' said the margravine. 'But you little know, my good Roy, the burden of an unmarried princess; and heartily glad shall I be to hand her over to Baroness Turckems. That 's her instituted governess, duenna, dragon,—what you will. She was born for responsibility, I was not; it makes me miserable. I have had no holiday. True, while she was like one of their wax virgins I had a respite. Fortunately, I hear of you English, that when you fall to sighing, you suck your thumbs and are consoled.'

My father bowed her, and smiled her, and whirled her away from the subject. I heard him say, under his breath, that he had half a mind to issue orders for an allowance of grog to be served out to the sailors on the spot. I suggested, as I conceived in a similar spirit, the forcible ducking of Mr. Peterborough. He appeared to entertain and relish the notion in earnest.

'It might do. It would gratify her enormously,' he said, and eyed the complacent clerical gentleman with transparent jealousy of his claims to decent treatment. 'Otherwise, I must confess,' he added, 'I am at a loss. My wits are in the doldrums.'

He went up to Mr. Peterborough, and, with an air of great sincerity and courtesy, requested him in French to create a diversion for her Highness the Margravine of Rippau during the extreme heat of the afternoon by precipitating himself headlong into forty fathoms, either attached or unattached. His art in baffling Mr. Peterborough's attempts to treat the unheard-of request as a jest was extraordinary. The ingenuity of his successive pleas for pressing such a request pertinaciously upon Mr. Peterborough in particular, his fixed eye, yet cordial deferential manner, and the stretch of his forefinger, and argumentative turn of the head—indicative of an armed disputant fully on the alert, and as if it were of profound and momentous importance that he should thoroughly defeat and convince his man—overwhelmed us. Mr. Peterborough, not being supple in French, fell back upon his English with a flickering smile of protestation; but even in his native tongue he could make no head against the tremendous volubility and brief eager pauses besetting him.

The farce was too evanescent for me to reproduce it.

Peterborough turned and fled to his cabin. Half the crew were on the broad grin. The margravine sprang to

my father's arm, and entreated him to be her guest in her Austrian mountain summer-seat. Ottilia was now her darling and her comfort. Whether we English youth sucked our thumbs, or sighed furiously, she had evidently ceased to care. Mr. Peterborough assured me at night that he had still a difficulty in persuading himself of my father's absolute sanity, so urgent was the fire of his eye in seconding his preposterous proposal; and, as my father invariably treated with the utmost reserve a farce played out, they never arrived at an understanding about it, beyond a sententious agreement once, in the extreme heat of an Austrian highland valley, that the option of taking a header into sea-water would there be divine.

Our yacht winged her way home. Prince Ernest of Eppenwelzen-Sarkeld, accompanied by Baroness Turckems, and Prince Otto, his nephew, son of the Prince of Eisenberg, a captain of Austrian lancers, joined the margravine in Würtemberg, and we felt immediately that domestic affairs were under a different management. Baroness Turckems relieved the margravine of her guard. She took the princess into custody. Prince Ernest greeted us with some affability; but it was communicated to my father that he expected an apology before he could allow himself to be as absolutely unclouded toward us as the blaze of his titles. My father declined to submit; so the prince inquired of us what our destination was. Down the Danube to the Black Sea and Asia Minor, Greece, Egypt, the Nile, the Desert, India, possibly, and the Himalayas, my father said. The prince bowed. The highest personages, if they cannot travel, are conscious of a sort of airy majesty pertaining to one who can command so wide and far a flight. We were supplicated by the margravine to appease her brother's pride with half a word. My father was firm. The margravine

reached her two hands to him. He kissed over them each in turn. They interchanged smart semi-flattering or cutting sentences.

'Good!' she concluded; 'now I sulk you for five years.'

'You would decapitate me, madam, and weep over my astonished head, would you not?'

'Upon my honour, I would,' she shook herself to reply.

He smiled rather sadly.

'No pathos!' she implored him.

'Not while I live, madam,' said he.

At this her countenance underwent a tremour.

'And when that ends . . . friend! well, I shall have had my last laugh in the world.'

Both seemed affected. My father murmured some soothing word.

'Then you *do* mean to stay with me?' the margravine caught him up.

'Not in livery, your Highness.'

'To the deuce with you!' would be a fair translation of the exalted lady's reply. She railed at his insufferable pride.

'And you were wrong, wrong,' she pursued. 'You offended the prince mightily: you travestied his most noble ancestor——'

'In your service, may it please you.'

'You offended, offended him, I say, and you haven't the courage to make reparation. And when I tell you the prince is manageable as your ship, if you will only take and handle the rudder. Do you perceive?'

She turned to me.

'Hither, Mr. Harry; come, persuade him. Why, you do not desire to leave me, do you?'

Much the reverse. But I had to congratulate myself subsequently on having been moderate in the expression of my wishes; for, as my father explained to me, with

sufficient lucidity to enlighten my dulness, the margravine was tempting him grossly. She saw more than I did of his plans. She could actually affect to wink at them that she might gain her point, and have her amusement, and live for the hour, treacherously beguiling a hoodwinked pair to suppose her partially blind or wholly complaisant. My father knew her and fenced her.

'Had I yielded,' he said, when my heart was low after the parting, 'I should have shown her my hand. I do not choose to manage the prince that the margravine may manage me. I pose my pride—immolate my son to it, Richie? I hope not. No. At Vienna we shall receive an invitation to Sarkeld for the winter, if we hear nothing of entreaties to turn aside to Ischl at Munich. She is sure to entreat me to accompany her on her annual visit to her territory of Rippau, which she detests; and, indeed, there is not a vine in the length and breadth of it. She thought herself broad awake, and I have dosed her with an opiate.'

He squeezed my fingers tenderly. I was in want both of consolation and very delicate handling when we drove out of the little Würtemberg town: I had not taken any farewell from Ottilia. Baroness Turckems was already exercising her functions of dragon. With the terrible forbidding word 'Repose' she had wafted the princess to her chamber in the evening, and folded her inextricably round and round in the morning. The margravine huffed, the prince icy, Ottilia invisible, I found myself shooting down from the heights of a dream among shattered fragments of my cloud-palace before I well knew that I had left off treading common earth. All my selfish nature cried out to accuse Ottilia. We drove along a dusty country road that lay like a glaring shaft of the desert between vineyards and hills.

'There,' said my father, waving his hand where the hills

on our left fell to a distance and threw up a lofty head and neck cut with one white line, 'your Hohenzollerns shot up there. Their castle looks like a tight military stock. Upon my word, their native mountain has the air of a drum major. Mr. Peterborough, have you a mind to climb it? We are at your disposal.'

'Thank you, thank you, sir,' said the Rev. Ambrose, gazing enthusiastically, but daunted by the heat: 'if it is your wish?'

'We have none that is not yours, Mr. Peterborough. You love ruins, and we are adrift just now. I presume we can drive to the foot of the ascent. I should wish my son perhaps to see the source of great houses.'

Here it was that my arm was touched by old Schwartz. He saluted stiffly, and leaning from the saddle on the trot of his horse at an even pace with our postillion, stretched out a bouquet of roses. I seized it palpitating, smelt the roses, and wondered. May a man write of his foolishness?—tears rushed to my eyes. Schwartz was far behind us when my father caught sight of the magical flowers.

'Come!' said he, glowing, 'we will toast the Hohenstaufens and the Hohenzollerns to-night, Richie.'

Later, when I was revelling in fancies sweeter than the perfume of the roses, he pressed their stems reflectively, unbound them, and disclosed a slip of crested paper. On it was written:

'Violets are over.'

Plain words; but a princess had written them, and never did so golden a halo enclose any piece of human handiwork.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE TIME OF ROSES

I SAT and thrilled from head to foot with a deeper emotion than joy. Not I, but a detached self allied to the careering universe and having life in it.

'Violets are over.'

The first strenuous effort of my mind was to grasp the meaning, subtle as odour, in these words. Innumerable meanings wreathed away unattainable to thought. The finer senses could just perceive them ere they vanished. Then as I grew material, two camps were pitched and two armies prepared to fight to establish one distinct meaning. 'Violets are over, so I send you roses'; she writes you simple fact. Nay, 'Our time of violets is over, now for us the roses'; she gives you heavenly symbolism.

'From violets to roses, so run the seasons.'

Or is it,—

'From violets to roses, thus far have we two travelled?'

But would she merely say, 'I have not this kind of flower, and I send you another?'

True, but would she dare to say, 'The violets no longer express my heart; take the roses?'

'Maidenly, and a Princess, yet sweet and grateful, she gives you the gracefullest good speed.

'Noble above all human distinctions, she binds you to herself, if you will it.'

The two armies came into collision, the luck of the day going to the one I sided with.

But it was curiously observable that the opposing force recovered energy from defeat, while mine languished in

victory. I headed them alternately, and it invariably happened so.

'She cannot mean so much as this.'

'She must mean more than that.'

Thus the Absolute and the Symbolical factions struggled on. A princess drew them as the moon the tides.

By degrees they subsided and united, each reserving its view; a point at which I imagined myself to have regained my proper humility. 'The princess has sent you these flowers out of her homely friendliness; not seeing you to speak her farewell, she, for the very reason that she can do it innocent of any meaning whatsoever, bids you be sure you carry her esteem with you. Is the sun of blue heavens guilty of the shadow it casts? Clear your mind. She means nothing. Warmth and beauty come from her, and are on you for the moment.—But full surely she is a thing to be won: she is human: did not her hand like a gentle snake seek yours, and detain it, and bear it away into the heart of her sleep?—Be moderate. Let not a thought or a dream spring from her condescension, lest you do outrage to her noble simplicity. Look on that high Hohenzollern hill-top: she also is of the line of those who help to found illustrious Houses: what are you?'

I turned to my father and stared him in the face. What was he? Were we not losing precious time in not prosecuting his suit? I put this question to him, believing that it would sound as too remote from my thoughts to betray them. He glanced at the roses, and answered gladly,—

'Yes!—no, no! we must have our holiday. Mr. Peterborough is for exploring a battle-field in the neighbourhood of Munich. He shall. I wish him to see the Salzkammergut, and have a taste of German Court-life. Allow me to be captain, Richie, will you? I will show

you how battles are gained and mountains are scaled. That young Prince Otto of Eisenberg is a fine young fellow. Those Austrian cavalry regiments are good training-schools for the carriage of a young man's head and limbs. I would match my boy against him in the exercises—fencing, shooting, riding.'

'As you did at Bath,' said I.

He replied promptly: 'We might give him Anna Penrhys to marry. English wives are liked here—adored if they fetch a dowry. Concerning my suit, Richie, enough if it keeps pace with us: and we are not going slow. It is a thing certain. Dettermain and Newson have repeatedly said, "Money, money!' hand us money, and we guarantee you a public recognition." Money we now have. But we cannot be in two fields at once. Is it your desire to return to England?'

'Not at all,' said I, with a chill at the prospect.

'If it is——?' he pressed me, and relenting added: 'I confess I enjoy this Suabian land as much as you do. Indolence is occasionally charming. I am at work, nevertheless. But, Richie, determine not to think little of yourself: there is the main point; believe me, that is half the battle. You, sir, are one of the wealthiest gentlemen in Europe. You are pronouncedly a gentleman. That is what we can say of you at present, as you appear in the world's eye. And you are by descent illustrious. Well, no more of that, but consider if you kneel down, who will decline to put a foot on you? Princes have the habit, and they do it as a matter of course. *Challenge* them. And they, Richie, are particularly susceptible to pity for the misfortunes of their class—kind, I should say, for class it is not; now I have done. All I tell you is, I intend you, under my guidance, to be happy.'

I thought his remarks the acutest worldly wisdom I

had ever heard,—his veiled method of treating my case the shrewdest, delicatest, and most consoling, most inspiring. It had something of the mystical power of the Oracles,—the power which belongs to anonymous writing. Had he disposed of my apparent rival, and exalted me to the level of a princely family, in open speech, he would have conveyed no balm to me—I should have classed it as one confident man's opinion. Disguised and vague, but emphatic, and interpreted by the fine beam of his eye, it was intoxicating; and when he said subsequently, 'Our majority Burgundy was good emperor wine, Richie. You approved it? I laid that vintage down to give you a lesson to show you that my plans come safe to maturity,'—I credited him with a large share of foresight, though I well knew his habit of antedating his sagacity, and could not but smile at the illustration of it.

You perceive my state without rendering it necessary for me to label myself.

I saw her next in a pinewood between Ischl and the Traun. I had climbed the steep hill alone, while my father and Mr. Peterborough drove round the carriage-road to the margravine's white villa. Ottilia was leaning on the arm of Baroness Turckems, walking—a miracle that disentangled her cruelly from my net of fancies. The baroness placed a second hand upon her as soon as I was seen standing in the path. Ottilia's face coloured like the cyclamen at her feet.

'You!' she said.

'I might ask, is it you, princess?'

'Some wonder has been worked, you see.'

'I thank heaven.'

'You had a part in it.'

'The poorest possible.'

'Yet I shall presume to call you Doctor Oceanus.'

'Will you repeat his medicine? The yacht awaits you always.'

'When I am well I study. Do not you?'

'I have never studied in my life.'

'Ah, lose no more time. The yacht is delicious idleness, but it is idleness. I am longing for it now, I am still so very weak. My dear Sibley has left me to be married. She marries a Hanoverian officer. We change countries—I mean,' the princess caught back her tongue, 'she will become German, not compatriot of your ships of war. My English rebukes me. I cease to express . . . It is like my walking, done half for pride, I think. Baroness, lower me, and let me rest.'

The baroness laid her gently on the dry brown pine-sheddings, and blew a whistle that hung at her girdle, by which old Schwartz, kept out of sight to encourage the princess's delusion of pride in her walking, was summoned. Ottilia had fainted. The baroness shot a suspicious glance at me. 'It comes of this everlasting English talk,' I heard her mutter. She was quick to interpose between me and the form I had once raised and borne undisputedly.

'Schwartz is the princess's attendant, sir,' she said. 'In future, may I request you to talk German?'

The Prince of Eppenwelzen and Prince Otto were shooting in the mountains. The margravine, after conversing with the baroness, received me stiffly. She seemed eager to be rid of us; was barely hospitable. My mind was too confused to take much note of words and signs. I made an appointment to meet my father the day following, and walked away and returned at night, encountered Schwartz and fed on the crumbs of tidings I got from him, a good, rough old faithful fellow, far past the age for sympathy, but he had carried Ottilia when she was an infant, and meant to die in her service. I thought him enviable above most creatures.

His principal anxiety was about my finding sleeping quarters. When he had delivered himself three times over of all that I could lead him to say, I left him still puffing at his pipe. He continued on guard to be in readiness to run for a doctor, should one be wanted. Twice in the night I came across his path. The night was quiet, dark blue, and starry; the morning soft and fragrant. The burden of the night was bearable, but that of daylight I fled from, and all day I was like one expecting a crisis. Laughter, with so much to arouse it, hardly had any foothold within me to stir my wits. For if I said 'Folly!' I did not feel it, and what I felt I did not understand. My heart and head were positively divided. Days and weeks were spent in reconciling them a little; days passed with a pencil and scribbled slips of paper—the lines written with regular commencements and irregular terminations; you know them. Why had Ottilia fainted? She recommended hard study —thinks me idle, worthless; she has a grave intelligence, a serious estimation of life; she thinks me intrinsically of the value of a summer fly. But why did she say, 'We change countries,' and immediately flush, break and falter, lose command of her English, grow pale and swoon; why? With this question my disastrous big heart came thundering up to the closed doors of comprehension. It was unanswerable. 'We change countries.' That is, she and Miss Sibley change countries, because the English woman marries a German, and the German princess—oh! enormous folly. Pierce it, slay it, trample it under. Is that what the insane heart is big with? Throughout my night-watch I had been free of it, as one who walks meditating in cloisters on a sentence that once issued from divine lips. There was no relief, save in those pencilled lines which gave honest laughter a chance, they stood like such a hasty levy of raw recruits raised for

war, going through the goose-step, with pretty accurate shoulders, and feet of distracting degrees of extension, enough to craze a rhythmical drill-sergeant. I exulted at the first reading, shuddered at the second, and at the third felt desperate, destroyed them and sat staring at vacancy as if I had now lost the power of speech.

At last I flung away idleness and came to a good resolution; and I carried it through. I studied at a famous German university, not far from Hanover. My father, after discussing my project with me from the point of view of amazement, settled himself in the University town, a place of hopeless dulness, where the stones of the streets and the houses seemed to have got their knotty problem to brood over, and never knew holiday. A fire for acquisition possessed me, and soon an ungovernable scorn for English systems of teaching—sound enough for the producing of gentlemen, and perhaps of merchants; but gentlemen rather bare of graces, and merchants not too scientific in finance. Mr. Peterborough conducted the argument against me until my stout display of facts, or it may have been my insolence, combined with the ponderous pressure of the atmosphere upon one who was not imbibing a counteracting force, drove him on a tour among German cathedrals.

Letters from Riversley informed me that my proceedings were approved, though the squire wanted me near him. We offered entertainments to the students on a vast scale. The local newspaper spoke of my father as the great Lord Roy. So it happened that the margravine at Sarkeld heard of us. Returning from a visit to the prince's palace, my father told me that he saw an opportunity for our being useful to the prince, who wanted money to work a newly-discovered coal-mine in his narrow dominions, and he suggested that I might induce the squire to supply it; as a last extremity I could advance

the money. Meanwhile he had engaged to accompany the prince in mufti to England to examine into the working of coal-mines, and hire an overseer and workmen to commence operations on the Sarkeld property. It would be obligatory to entertain him fitly in London.

'Certainly,' said I.

'During our absence the margravine will do her best to console you, Richie. The prince chafes at his poverty. We give him a display of wealth in England; here we are particularly discreet. We shall be surer of our ground in time. I set Dettermain and Newson at work. I have written for them to hire a furnished mansion for a couple of months, carriages, horses, lacqueys. But over here we must really be—goodness me! I know how hard it is! —we must hold the reins on ourselves tight. Baroness Turckems is a most estimable person on the side of her duty. Why, the Dragon of Wantley sat on its eggs, you may be convinced! She is a praiseworthy dragon. The side she presents to us is horny, and not so agreeable. Talk German when she is on guard. Further I need not counsel a clever old son. Counsel me, Richie. Would it be adviseable to run the prince down to Riversley?—a Prince!'

'Oh! decidedly not,' was my advice.

'Well, well,' he assented.

I empowered him to sell out Bank stock.

He wrote word from England of a very successful expedition. The prince, travelling under the title of Count Delzenburg, had been suitably entertained, received by Lady Wilts, Serena Marchioness of Edbury, Lady Denewdney, Lady Sampleman, and others. He had visited my grandfather's mine, and that of Miss Penrhys, and was astounded; had said of me that I wanted but a title to be as brilliant a *parti* as any in Europe.

The margravine must have received orders from her

brother to be civil to me; she sent me an imperious invitation from her villa, and for this fruit of my father's diplomacy I yielded him up my daintier feelings, my judgement into the bargain.

Snows of early Spring were on the pinewood country I had traversed with Temple. Ottilia greeted me in health and vivacity. The margravine led me up to her in the very saloon where Temple, my father, and I had sat after the finale of the statue scene, saying—

'Our sea-lieutenant.'

'It delights me to hear he has turned University student,' she said; and in English: 'You have made friends of your books?'

She was dressed in blue velvet to the throat; the hair was brushed from the temples and bound in a simple knot. Her face and speech, fair and unconstrained, had neither shadow nor beam directed specially for me. I replied,—

'At least I have been taught to despise idleness.'

'My Professor tells me it is strange for any of your countrymen to love books.'

'We have some good scholars, princess.'

'You have your Bentley and Porson. Oh! I know many of the world's men have grown in England. Who can deny that? What we mean is, your society is not penetrated with learning. But my Professor shall dispute with you. Now you are facile in our German you can defend yourself. He is a deep scholar, broad over tongues and dialects, European, Asiatic—a lion to me, poor little mouse! I am speaking of Herr Professor von Karsteg, lady aunt.'

'Speak intelligibly, and don't drum on my ear with that hybrid language,' rejoined the margravine.

'Hybrid! It is my Herr Professor's word. But English is the choice gathering of languages, and honey is

hybrid, unless you condemn the bee to suck at a single flower.'

'Ha! you strain compliments like the poet Fretzel,' the margravine exclaimed. 'Luckily, they're not addressed to human creatures. You will find the villa dull, Herr Harry Richmond. For my part, every place is dull to me that your father does not enliven. We receive no company in the prince's absence, so we are utterly cut off from fools; we have simply none about us.'

'The deprivation is one we are immensely sensible of!' said the princess.

'Laugh on! you will some day be aware of their importance in daily life, Ottilia.'

The princess answered: 'If I could hate, it would be such persons.' A sentence that hung in the memory of one knowing himself to be animated by the wildest genius of folly.

We drove to the statue of Prince Albrecht Wohlgemuth, overlooking leagues of snow-roofed branches. Again Ottilia reverted to Temple,—

'That dear little friend of yours who wandered out with you to seek your father, and is now a sailor! I cannot forget him. It strikes me as a beautiful piece of the heroism of boys. You both crossed the sea to travel over the whole Continent until you should find him, did you not? What is hard to understand, is your father's not writing to you while he did us the favour to reside at the palace.'

'Roy is a butterfly,' said the margravine.

'That I cannot think.'

'Roy was busy, he was occupied. I won't have him abused. Besides, one can't be always caressing and cajoling one's pretty brats.'

'He is an intensely loving father.'

'Very well; establish that, and what does it matter whether he wrote or not? A good reputation is the best vindication.'

The princess smiled. 'See here, dearest aunty, the two boys passed half the night here, until my Aennchen's father gave them shelter.'

'Apparently he passes half or all the night in the open air everywhere,' said the margravine.

I glanced hurriedly over both faces. The margravine was snuffing her nostrils up contemptuously. The princess had vividly reddened. Her face was luminous over the nest of white fur folding her neck.

'Yes, I must have the taste for it: for when I was a child,' said I, plunging at anything to catch a careless topic, 'I was out in my father's arms through a winter night, and I still look back on it as one of the most delightful I have ever known. I wish I could describe the effect it had on me. A track of blood in the snow could not be brighter.'

The margravine repeated,—

'A track of blood in the snow! My good young man, you have excited forms of speech.'

I shuddered. Ottilia divined that her burning blush had involved me. Divination is fiery in the season of blushes, and I, too, fell on the track of her fair spirit, setting out from the transparent betrayal by Schwartz of my night-watch in the pine-wood near the Traun river-falls. My feelings were as if a wave had rolled me helpless to land, at the margravine's mercy should she put another question. She startled us with a loud outburst of laughter.

'No! no man upon this earth but Roy could have sat that horse I don't know how many minutes by the clock, as a figure of bronze,' she exclaimed.

Ottilia and I exchanged a grave look. The gentleness

of the old time was sweet to us both: but we had the wish that my father's extravagant prominency in it might be forgotten.

At the dinner-table I made the acquaintance of the Herr Professor Dr. Julius von Karsteg, tutor to the princess, a grey, broad-headed man, whose chin remained imbedded in his neck-cloth when his eyelids were raised on a speaker. The first impression of him was, that he was chiefly neck-cloth, coat-collar, grand head, and gruffness. He had not joined the ceremonial step from the reception to the dining saloon, but had shuffled in from a side-door. No one paid him any deference save the princess. The margravine had the habit of thrumming the table thrice as soon as she heard his voice: nor was I displeased by such an exhibition of impatience, considering that he spoke merely for the purpose of snubbing me. His powers were placed in evidence by her not daring to utter a sarcasm, which was possibly the main cause of her burning fretfulness.

I believe there was not a word uttered by me throughout the dinner that escaped him. Nevertheless, he did his business of catching and worrying my poor unwary sentences too neatly for me, an admirer of real force and aptitude, to feel vindictive. I behaved to him like a gentleman, as we phrase it, and obtained once an encouraging nod from the margravine. She leaned to me to say, that they were accustomed to think themselves lucky if no learned talk came on between the Professor and his pupil. The truth was, that his residence in Sarkeld was an honour to the prince, and his acceptance of the tutorship a signal condescension, accounted for by his appreciation of the princess's intelligence. He was a man distinguished even in Germany for scholarship, rather notorious for his political and social opinions too. The margravine, with infinite humour in her countenance,

informed me that he wished to fit the princess for the dignity of a Doctor of Laws.

'It says much for her that he has not spoilt her manners; her health, you know, he succeeded in almost totally destroying, and he is at it again. The man is, I suspect, at heart arrant Republican. He may teach a girl whatever nonsensical politics he likes—it goes at the lifting of the bridegroom's little finger. We could not permit him to be near a young prince. Alas! we have none.'

The Professor allowed himself extraordinary liberties with strangers, the guests of the margravine. I met him crossing an inner court next day. He interrupted me in the middle of a commonplace remark, and to this effect:—

'You are either a most fortunate or a most unfortunate young man!'

So profoundly penetrated with thoughtfulness was the tone of his voice that I could not take umbrage. The attempt to analyze his signification cost me an aching forehead, perhaps because I knew it too acutely.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OTTILIA

She was on horseback, I on foot, Schwartz for sole witness, and a wide space of rolling silent white country around us.

We had met in the fall of the winter noon by accident.

'You like my Professor?' said Ottilia.

'I do: I respect him for his learning.'

'You forgive him his irony? It is not meant to be personal to you. England is the object; and partly, I

may tell you, it springs from jealousy. You have such wealth! You embrace half the world: you are such a little island! All this is wonderful. The bitterness is, you are such a mindless people—I do but quote to explain my Professor's ideas. "Mindless," he says, "and arrogant, and neither in the material nor in the spiritual kingdom of noble or gracious stature, and ceasing to have a brave aspect." He calls you squat Goths. Can you bear to hear me?'

'Princess!'

'And to his conception, you, who were pioneers when the earth had to be shaped for implements and dug for gold, will turn upon us and stop our march; you are to be overthrown and left behind, there to gain humility from the only teacher you can understand—from poverty. Will you defend yourself?'

'Well, no, frankly, I will not. The proper defence for a nation is its history.'

'For an individual?'

'For a man, his readiness to abide by his word.'

'For a woman—what?'

'For a princess, her ancestry.'

'Ah! but I spoke of women. There, there is my ground of love for my Professor! I meet my equals, princes, princesses, and the man, the woman, is out of them, gone, flown! They are out of the tide of humanity; they are walking titles. "Now," says my Professor, "that tide is the blood of our being; the blood is the life-giver; and to be cut off from it is to perish." Our princely houses he esteems as dead wood. Not near so much say I: yet I hear my equals talk, and I think, "Oh! my Professor, they testify to your wisdom." I love him because he has given my every sense a face-forward attitude (you will complain of my feebleness of speech) to exterior existence. There is a princely

view of life which is a true one; but it is a false one if it is the sole one. In your Parliament your House of Commons shows us real princes, your Throne merely titled ones. I speak what everybody knows, and you, I am sure, are astonished to hear me.'

'I am,' said I.

'It is owing to my Professor, my mind's father and mother. They say it is the pleasure of low-born people to feel themselves princes; mine it is to share their natural feelings. "For a princess, her ancestry." Yes; but for a princess who is no more than princess, her ancestors are a bundle of faggots, and she, with her mind and heart tied fast to them, is, at least a good half of her, dead wood. This is our opinion. May I guess at your thoughts?'

'It 's more than I could dare to do myself, princess.'

How different from the Ottilia I had known, or could have imagined! That was one thought.

'Out of the number, then, this,' she resumed: 'you think that your English young ladies have command over their tongues: is it not so?'

'There are prattlers among them.'

'Are they educated strictly?'

'I know little of them. They seem to me to be educated to conceal their education.'

'They reject ideas?'

'It is uncertain whether they have had the offer.'

Ottilia smiled. 'Would it be a home in their midst?'

Something moved my soul to lift wings, but the passion sank.

'I questioned you of English ladies,' she resumed, 'because we read your writings of us. Your kindness to us is that which passes from nurse to infant; your criticism reminds one of paedagogue and urchin. You make us sorry for our manners and habits, if they are so bad; but most of all you are merry at our simplicity. Not

only we say what we feel, we display it. Now, I am so German, this offence is especially mine.'

I touched her horse's neck, and said, 'I have not seen it.'

'Yet you understand me. You know me well. How is that?'

The murmur of honest confession came from me: 'I *have* seen it!'

She laughed. 'I bring you to be German, you see. Could you forsake your England?'

'Instantly, though not willingly.'

'Not regrettingly?'

'Cheerfully, if I had my work and my—my friend.'

'No; but well I know a man's field of labour is his country. You have your ambition.'

'Yes, now I have.'

She struck a fir-branch with her riding-whip, scattering flakes on my head. 'Would that extinguish it?'

'In the form of an avalanche perhaps it would.'

'Then you make your aims a part of your life?'

'I do.'

'Then you win! or it is written of you that you never knew failure! So with me. I set my life upon my aim when I feel that the object is of true worth. I win, or death hides from me my missing it. This I look to; this obtains my Professor's nod, and the approval of my conscience. Worthiness, however!—the mind must be trained to discern it. We can err very easily in youth; and to find ourselves shooting at a false mark uncontrollably must be a cruel thing. I cannot say it is undeserving the scourge of derision. Do you know yourself? I do not; and I am told by my Professor that it is the sole subject to which you should not give a close attention. I can believe him. For who beguiles so much as Self? Tell her to play, she plays her sweetest. Lurk to surprise

her, and what a serpent she becomes! She is not to be aware that you are watching her. You have to review her acts, observe her methods. Always be above her; then by-and-by you catch her hesitating at cross-roads; then she is bare: you catch her bewailing or exulting; then she can no longer pretend she is other than she seems. I make self the feminine, for she is the weaker, and the soul has to purify and raise her. On that point my Professor and I disagree. Dr. Julius, unlike our modern Germans, esteems women over men, or it is a further stroke of his irony. He does not think your English ladies have heads: of us he is proud as a laurelled poet. Have I talked you dumb?'

'Princess, you have given me matter to think upon.'

She shook her head, smiling with closed eyelids.

I, now that speech had been summoned to my lips, could not restrain it, and proceeded, scarcely governing the words, quite without ideas;—'For you to be indifferent to rank—yes, you may well be; you have intellect; you are high above me in both——' So on, against good taste and common sense.

She cried: 'Oh! no compliments from you to me. I will receive them, if you please, by deputy. Let my Professor hear your immense admiration for his pupil's accomplishments. Hear him then in return! He will beat at me like the rainy West wind on a lily. "See," he will say, when I am broken and bespattered, "she is fair, she is stately, is she not!" And really I feel, at the sound of praise, though I like it, that the opposite, satire, condemnation, has its good right to pelt me. Look; there is the tower, there 's the statue, and under that line of pine-trees the path we ran up;—"dear English boys!" as I remember saying to myself; and what did you say of me?'

Her hand was hanging loose. I grasped it. She drew

a sudden long breath, and murmured, without fretting to disengage herself,—

'My friend, not that!'

Her voice carried an unmistakeable command. I kissed above the fingers and released them.

'Are you still able to run?' said she, leading with an easy canter, face averted. She put on fresh speed; I was outstripped.

Had she quitted me in anger? Had she parted from me out of view of the villa windows to make it possible for us to meet accidentally again in the shadow of her old protecting Warhead, as we named him from his appearance, gaunt Schwartz?

CHAPTER XXIX

AN EVENING WITH DR. JULIUS VON KARSTEG

In my perplexity, I thought of the Professor's saying: 'A most fortunate or a most unfortunate young man.' These words began to strike me as having a prophetic depth that I had not fathomed. I felt myself fast becoming bound in every limb, every branch of my soul. Ottilia met me smiling. She moved free as air. She could pursue her studies, and argue and discuss and quote, keep unclouded eyes, and laugh and play, and be her whole living self, unfettered, as if the pressure of my hand implied nothing. Perhaps for that reason I had her pardon. 'My friend, not that!' Her imperishably delicious English rang me awake, and lulled me asleep. Was it not too securely friendly? Or was it not her natural voice to the best beloved, bidding him respect her, that we might meet with the sanction of her trained discretion? The Professor would invite me to his room after the

'sleep well' of the ladies, and I sat with him much like his pipe-bowl, which burned bright a moment at one sturdy puff, but generally gave out smoke in fantastical wreaths. He told me frankly he had a poor idea of my erudition. My fancifulness he commended as something to be turned to use in writing stories. 'Give me time, and I 'll do better things,' I groaned. He rarely spoke of the princess; with grave affection always when he did. He was evidently observing me comprehensively. The result was beyond my guessing.

One night he asked me what my scheme of life was.

On the point of improvizing one of an impressive character, I stopped and confessed: 'I have so many that I may say I have none.' Expecting reproof, I begged him not to think the worse of me for that.

'Quite otherwise,' said he. 'I have never cared to read deliberately in the book you open to me, my good young man.'

'The book, Herr Professor?'

'Collect your wits. We will call it Shakespeare's book; or Göthe's, in the minor issues. No, not minor, but a narrower volume. You were about to give me the answer of a hypocrite. Was it not so?'

I admitted it, feeling that it was easily to have been perceived. He was elated.

'Good. Then I apprehend that you wait for the shifting of a tide to carry you on?'

'I try to strengthen my mind.'

'So I hear,' said he dryly.

'Well, as far as your schools of teaching will allow.'

'That is, you read and commit to memory, like other young scholars. Whereunto? Have you no aim? You have, or I am told you are to have, fabulous wealth—a dragon's heap. You are one of the main drainpipes of English gold. What is your object? To spend it?'

'I shall hope to do good with it.'

'To do good! There is hardly a prince or millionaire, in history or alive, who has not in his young days hugged that notion. Pleasure swarms, he has the pick of his market. You English live for pleasure.'

'We are the hardest workers in the world.'

'That you may live for pleasure! Deny it!'

He puffed his tobacco-smoke zealously, and resumed: 'Yes, you work hard for money. You eat and drink, and boast of your exercises: they sharpen your appetites. So goes the round. We strive, we fail; you are our frog-chorus of critics, and you suppose that your brek-ek-koax affects us. I say we strive and fail, but we strive on, while you remain in a past age, and are proud of it. You reproach us with lack of common sense, as if the belly were its seat. Now I ask you whether you have a scheme of life, that I may know whether you are to be another of those huge human pumpkins called rich men, who cover your country and drain its blood and intellect —those impoverishers of nature! Here we have our princes; but they are rulers, they are responsible, they have their tasks, and if they also run to gourds, the scandal punishes them and their order, all in seasonable time. They stand eminent. Do you mark me? They are not a community, and are not—bad enough! bad enough!—but they are not protected by laws in their right to do nothing for what they receive. That system is an invention of the commercial genius and the English.'

'We have our aristocracy, Herr Professor.'

'Your nobles are nothing but rich men inflated with empty traditions of insufferable, because unwarrantable, pride, and drawing substance from alliances with the merchant class. Are they your leaders? Do they lead you in Letters? in the Arts? ay, or in Government? No, not, I am informed, not even in military service!

and there our titled witlings do manage to hold up their brainless pates. You are all in one mass, struggling in the stream to get out and lie and wallow and belch on the banks. You work so hard that you have all but one aim, and that is fatness and ease!'

'Pardon me, Herr Professor,' I interposed, 'I see your drift. Still I think we are the only people on earth who have shown mankind a representation of freedom. And as to our aristocracy, I must, with due deference to you, maintain that it is widely respected.'

I could not conceive why he went on worrying me in this manner with his jealous outburst of Continental bile.

'Widely!' he repeated. 'It is widely respected; and you respect it: and why do you respect it?'

'We have illustrious names in our aristocracy.'

'We beat you in illustrious names and in the age of the lines, my good young man.'

'But not in a race of nobles who have stood for the country's liberties.'

'So long as it imperilled their own! Any longer?'

'Well, they have known how to yield. They have helped to build our Constitution.'

'Reverence their ancestors, then! The worse for such descendants. But you have touched the exact stamp of the English mind:—it is, to accept whatsoever is bequeathed it, without inquiry whether there is any change in the matter. Nobles in very fact you would not let them be if they could. Nobles in name, with a remote recommendation to posterity—that suits you!'

He sat himself up to stuff a fresh bowl of tobacco, while he pursued: 'Yes, yes: you worship your aristocracy. It is notorious. You have a sort of sagacity. I am not prepared to contest the statement that you have a political instinct. Here it is chiefly social. You worship

your so-called aristocracy perforce in order to preserve an ideal of contrast to the vulgarity of the nation.'

This was downright insolence.

It was intolerable. I jumped on my feet. 'The weapons I would use in reply to such remarks I cannot address to you, Herr Professor. Therefore, excuse me.'

He sent out quick spirts of smoke rolling into big volumes. 'Nay, my good young Englishman, but on the other hand you have not answered me. And hear me: yes, you have shown us a representation of freedom. True. But you are content with it in a world that moves by computation some considerable sum upwards of sixty thousand miles an hour.'

'Not on a fresh journey—a recurring course!' said I.

'Good!' he applauded, and I was flattered.

'I grant you the physical illustration,' the Professor continued, and with a warm gaze on me, I thought. 'The mind journeys somewhat in that way, and we in our old Germany hold that the mind advances notwithstanding. Astronomers condescending to earthly philosophy may admit that advance in the physical universe is computable, though not perceptible. Somewhither we tend, shell and spirit. You English, fighting your little battles of domestic policy, and sneering at us for flying at higher game,—you unimpressionable English, who won't believe in the existence of aims that don't drop on the ground before your eyes, and squat and stare at you, you assert that man's labour is completed when the poor are kept from crying out. Now my question is, have you a scheme of life consonant with the spirit of modern philosophy—with the views of intelligent, moral, humane human beings of this period? Or are you one of your robust English brotherhood worthy of a Caligula in his prime, lions in gymnastics—for a time; sheep

always in the dominions of mind; and all of one pattern, all in a rut! Favour me with an outline of your ideas. Pour them out pell-mell, intelligibly or not, no matter. I undertake to catch you somewhere. I mean to know you, hark you, rather with your assistance than without it.'

We were deep in the night. I had not a single idea ready for delivery. I could have told him, that wishing was a good thing, excess of tobacco a bad, moderation in speech one of the outward evidences of wisdom; but Ottilia's master in the Humanities exacted civility from me.

'Indeed,' I said, 'I have few thoughts to communicate at present, Herr Professor. My German will fail me as soon as I quit common ground. I love my country, and I do not reckon it as perfect. We are swillers, possibly gluttons; we have a large prosperous middle class; many good men are to be found in it.'

His discharges of smoke grew stifling. My advocacy was certainly of a miserable sort.

'Yes, Herr Professor, on my way when a boy to this very place I met a thorough good man.'

Here I related the tale of my encounter with Captain Welsh.

Dr. Julius nodded rapidly for continuations. Further! further!

He refused to dig at the mine within me, and seemed to expect it to unbosom its riches by explosion.

'Well, Herr Professor, we have conquered India, and hold it as no other people could.'

'*Vide* the articles in the last file of English newspapers!' said he.

'Suppose we boast of it——'

'Can you?' he simulated wonderment.

'Why, surely it 's something!'

'Something for non-commissioned officers to boast of; not for statesmen. However, say that you are fit to govern Asiatics. Go on.'

'I would endeavour to equalize ranks at home, encourage the growth of ideas . . .'

'Supporting a non-celibate clergy, and an intermingled aristocracy? Your endeavours, my good young man, will lessen like those of the man who employed a spade to uproot a rock. It wants blasting. Your married clergy and merchandized aristocracy are coils: they are the ivy about your social tree: you would resemble Laocoon in the throes, if one could imagine you anything of a heroic figure. Forward.'

In desperation I exclaimed, 'It 's useless! I have not thought at all. I have been barely educated. I only know that I do desire with all my heart to know more, to be of some service.'

'Now we are at the bottom, then!' said he.

But I cried, 'Stay; let me beg you to tell me what you meant by calling me a most fortunate, or a most unfortunate young man.'

He chuckled over his pipe-stem, 'Aha!'

'How am I one or the other?'

'By the weight of what you carry in your head.'

'How by the weight?'

He shot a keen look at me. 'The case, I suspect, is singular, and does not often happen to a youth. You are fortunate if you have a solid and adventurous mind: most unfortunate if you are a mere sensational whipster. There 's an explanation that covers the whole. I am as much in the dark as you are. I do not say which of us two has the convex eye.'

Protesting that I was unable to read riddles, though the heat of the one in hand made my frame glow, I entreated to have explicit words. He might be in Ottilia's

confidence, probing me—why not? Any question he chose to put to me, I said, I was ready to answer.

'But it 's the questioner who unmasks,' said he.

'Are we masked, Herr Professor? I was not aware of it.'

'Look within, and avoid lying.'

He stood up. 'My nights,' he remarked, 'are not commonly wasted in this manner. We Germans use the night for work.'

After a struggle to fling myself on his mercy and win his aid or counsel, I took his hand respectfully, and holding it, said, 'I am unable to speak out. I would if it involved myself alone.'

'Yes, yes, I comprehend; your country breeds honourable men, chivalrous youngsters,' he replied. 'It 's not enough—not enough. I want to see a mental force, energy of brain. If you had that, you might look as high as you liked for the match for it, with my consent. Do you hear? What I won't have is, flat robbery! Mark me, Germany or England, it 's one to me if I see vital powers in the field running to a grand career. It 's a fine field over there. As well there as here, then! But better here than there if it 's to be a wasp's life. Do you understand me?'

I replied, 'I think I do, if I may dare to'; and catching breath: 'Herr Professor, dear friend, forgive my boldness; grant me time to try me; don't judge of me at once; take me for your pupil—am I presumptuous in asking it?—make of me what you will, what you can; examine me; you may find there 's more in me than I or anybody may know. I have thoughts and aims, feeble at present—— Good God! I see nothing for me but a choice of the two—"most unfortunate" seems likeliest. You read at a glance that I had no other choice. Rather the extremes!—I would rather grasp

the limits of life and be swung to the pits below, be the most unfortunate of human beings, than never to have aimed at a star. You laugh at me? An Englishman must be horribly in earnest to talk as I do now. But it is a star!' (The image of Ottilia sprang fountain-like into blue night heavens before my eyes memorably.) 'She,' was my next word. I swallowed it, and with a burning face, petitioned for help in my studies.

To such sight as I had at that instant he appeared laughing outrageously. It was a composed smile. 'Right,' he said; 'you shall have help in a settled course. Certain Professors, friends of mine, at your University, will see you through it. Aim your head at a star—your head!—and even if you miss it you don't fall. It 's that light dancer, that gambler, the heart in you, my good young man, which aims itself at inaccessible heights, and has the fall—somewhat icy to reflect on! Give that organ full play and you may make sure of a handful of dust. Do you hear? It 's a mind that wins a mind. That is why I warn you of being most unfortunate if you are a sensational whipster. Good-night. Shut my door fast that I may not have the trouble to rise.'

I left him with the warm lamplight falling on his forehead, and books piled and sloped, shut and open; an enviable picture to one in my condition. The peacefulness it indicated made scholarship seem beautiful, attainable, I hoped. I had the sense to tell myself that it would give me unrotting grain, though it should fail of being a practicable road to my bright star; and when I spurned at consolations for failure, I could still delight to think that she shone over these harvests and the reapers.

CHAPTER XXX

A SUMMER STORM, AND LOVE

THE foregoing conversations with Ottilia and her teacher, hard as they were for passion to digest, grew luminous on a relapsing heart. Without apprehending either their exact purport or the characters of the speakers, I was transformed by them from a state of craving to one of intense quietude. I thought neither of winning her, nor of aiming to win her, but of a foothold on the heights she gazed at reverently. And if, sometimes, seeing and hearing her, I thought, Oh, rarest soul! the wish was, that brother and sisterhood of spirit might be ours. My other eager thirstful self I shook off like a thing worn out. Men in my confidence would have supposed me more rational: I was simply possessed.

My desire was to go into harness, buried in books, and for recreation to chase visions of original ideas for benefiting mankind. A clear-witted friend at my elbow, my dear Temple, perhaps, could have hit on the track of all this mental vagueness, but it is doubtful that he would have pushed me out of the strange mood, half stupor, half the folding-in of passion; it was such magical happiness. Not to be awake, yet vividly sensible; to lie calm and reflect, and only to reflect; be satisfied with each succeeding hour and the privations of the hour, and, as if in the depths of a smooth water, to gather fold over patient fold of the submerged self, safe from wounds; the happiness was not noble, but it breathed and was harmless, and it gave me rest when the alternative was folly and bitterness.

Visitors were coming to the palace to meet the prince,

on his return with my father from England. I went back to the University, jealous of the invasion of my ecstatic calm by new faces, and jealous when there of the privileges those new faces would enjoy; and then, how my recent deadness of life cried out against me as worse than a spendthrift, a destroyer! a nerveless absorbent of the bliss showered on me—the light of her morning presence when, just before embracing, she made her obeisance to the margravine, and kindly saluted me, and stooped her forehead for the baroness to kiss it; her gestures and her voice; her figure on horseback, with old Warhead following, and I meeting her but once!—her walk with the Professor, listening to his instructions; I used to see them walking up and down the cypress path of the villa garden, her ear given to him wholly as she continued her grave step, and he shuffling and treading out of his line across hers, or on the path-borders, and never apologizing, nor she noticing it. At night she sang, sometimes mountain ditties to the accompaniment of the zither, leaning on the table and sweeping the wires between snatches of talk. Nothing haunted me so much as those tones of her zither, which were little louder than summer gnats when fireflies are at their brightest and storm impends.

My father brought horses from England, and a couple of English grooms, and so busy an air of cheerfulness, that I had, like a sick invalid, to beg him to keep away from me and prolong unlimitedly his visit to Sarkeld; the rather so, as he said he had now become indispensable to the prince besides the margravine. 'Only no more bronze statues!' I adjured him. He nodded. He had hired Count Fretzel's château, in the immediate neighbourhood, and was absolutely independent, he said. His lawyers were busy procuring evidence. He had impressed Prince Ernest with a due appreciation of the

wealth of a young English gentleman, by taking him over my grandfather's mine.

'And, Richie, we have advanced him a trifle of thousands for the working of this coal discovery of his. In six weeks our schooner yacht will be in the Elbe to offer him entertainment. He graciously deigns to accept a couple of English hunters at our hands; we shall improve his breed of horses, I suspect. Now, Richie, have I done well? I flatter myself I have been attentive to your interests, have I not?'

He hung waiting for confidential communications on my part, but did not press for them; he preserved an unvarying delicacy in that respect.

'You have nothing to tell?' he asked.

'Nothing,' I said. 'I have only to thank you.'

He left me. At no other period of our lives were we so disunited. I felt in myself the reverse of everything I perceived in him, and such letters as I wrote to the squire consequently had a homelier tone. It seems that I wrote of the pleasures of simple living—of living for learning's sake. Mr. Peterborough at the same time despatched praises of my sobriety of behaviour and diligent studiousness, confessing that I began to outstrip him in some of the higher branches. The squire's brief reply breathed satisfaction, but too evidently on the point where he had been led to misconceive the state of affairs. 'He wanted to have me near him, as did another person, whom I appeared to be forgetting; he granted me another year's leave of absence, bidding me bluffly not to be a bookworm and forget I was an Englishman.' The idea that I was deceiving him never entered my mind.

I was deceiving everybody, myself in the bargain, as a man must do when in chase of a woman above him in rank. The chase necessitates deceit—who knows? chicanery of a sort as well; it brings inevitable humiliations;

such that ever since the commencement of it at speed I could barely think of my father with comfort, and rarely met him with pleasure. With what manner of face could I go before the prince or the margravine, and say, I am an English commoner, the son of a man of doubtful birth, and I claim the hand of the princess? What contortions were not in store for these features of mine! Even as affairs stood now, could I make a confidant of Temple and let him see me through the stages of the adventure? My jingling of verses, my fretting about the signification of flowers, and trifling with symbols, haunted me excrutiatingly, taunting me with I know not what abject vileness of spirit.

In the midst of these tortures an arrow struck me, in the shape of an anonymous letter, containing one brief line: 'The princess is in need of help.'

I threw my books aside, and repaired to Count Fretzel's château, from which, happily, my father was absent; but the countenance of the princess gave me no encouragement to dream I could be of help to her; yet a second unsigned note worded in a quaint blunt manner, insisted that it was to me she looked. I chanced to hear the margravine, addressing Baroness Turckems, say: 'The princess's betrothal,' what further, escaped me. Soon after, I heard that Prince Otto was a visitor at the lake-palace. My unknown correspondent plied me a third time.

I pasted the scrap in my neglected book of notes and reflections, where it had ample space and about equal lucidity. It drew me to the book, nearly driving me desperate; I was now credulous of anything, except that the princess cared for help from me. I resolved to go home; I had no longer any zeal for study. The desolation of the picture of England in my mind grew congenial. It became imperative that I should go somewhere, for

news arrived of my father's approach with a French company of actors, and deafening entertainments were at hand. On the whole, I thought it decent to finish my course at the University, if I had not quite lost the power of getting into the heart of books. One who studies is not being a fool: that is an established truth. I thanked Dr. Julius for planting it among my recollections. The bone and marrow of study form the surest antidote to the madness of that light gambler, the heart, and distasteful as books were, I had gained the habit of sitting down to them, which was as good as an instinct toward the right medicine, if it would but work.

On an afternoon of great heat I rode out for a gaze at the lake-palace, that I chose to fancy might be the last, foreseeing the possibility of one of my fits of movement coming on me before sunset. My very pulses throbbed 'away!' Transferring the sense of overwhelming heat to my moral condition, I thought it the despair of silliness to stay baking in that stagnant place, where the sky did nothing but shine, gave nothing forth. The sky was bronze, a vast furnace dome. The folds of light and shadow everywhere were satin-rich; shadows perforce of blackness had light in them, and the light a sword-like sharpness over their edges. It was inanimate radiance. The laurels sparkled as with frost-points; the denser foliage dropped burning brown: a sickly saint's-ring was round the heads of the pines. That afternoon the bee hummed of thunder, and refreshed the ear.

I pitied the horse I rode, and the dog at his heels, but for me the intensity was inspiriting. Nothing lay in the light, I had the land to myself. 'What hurts *me*?' I thought. My physical pride was up, and I looked on the cattle in black corners of the fields, and here and there a man tumbled anyhow, a wreck of limbs, out of the

insupportable glare, with an even glance. Not an eye was lifted on me.

I saw nothing that moved until a boat shot out of the bight of sultry lake-water, lying close below the dark promontory where I had drawn rein. The rower was old Schwartz Warhead. How my gorge rose at the impartial brute! He was rowing the princess and a young man in uniform across the lake.

That they should cross from unsheltered paths to close covert was reasonable conduct at a time when the vertical rays of the sun were fiery arrow-heads. As soon as they were swallowed in the gloom I sprang in my saddle with torture, transfixed by one of the coarsest shafts of hideous jealousy. Off I flew, tearing through dry underwood, and round the bend of the lake, determined to confront her, wave the man aside, and have my last word with the false woman. Of the real Ottilia I had lost conception. Blood was inflamed, brain bare of vision: 'He takes her hand, she jumps from the boat; he keeps her hand, she feigns to withdraw it, all woman to him in her eyes: they pass out of sight.' A groan burst from me. I strained my crazy imagination to catch a view of them under cover of the wood and torture myself trebly, but it was now blank, shut fast. Sitting bolt upright, panting on horseback in the yellow green of one of the open woodways, I saw the young officer raise a branch of chestnut and come out. He walked moodily up to within a yard of my horse, looked up at me, and with an angry stare that grew to be one of astonishment, said, 'Ah? I think I have had the pleasure—somewhere? in Würtemberg, if I recollect.'

It was Prince Otto. I dismounted. He stood alone. The spontaneous question on my lips would have been 'Where is she?' but I was unable to speak a word.

'English?' he said, patting the horse's neck.

'Yes—the horse? an English hunter. How are you, Prince Otto? Do you like the look of him?'

'Immensely. You know we have a passion for English thoroughbreds. Pardon me, you look as if you had been close on a sunstroke. Do you generally take rides in this weather?'

'I was out by chance. If you like him, pray take him; take him. Mount him and try him. He is yours if you care to have him; if he doesn't suit you send him up to Count Fretzel's. I 've had riding enough in the light.'

'Perhaps you have,' said he, and hesitated. 'It 's difficult to resist the offer of such a horse. If you want to dispose of him, mention it when we meet again. Shall I try him? I have a slight inclination to go as hard as you have been going, but he shall have good grooming in the prince's stables, and that 's less than half as near again as Count Fretzel's place; and a horse like this ought not to be out in this weather, if you will permit me the remark.'

'No: I 'm ashamed of bringing him out, and shan't look on him with satisfaction,' said I. 'Take him and try him, and then take him from me, if you don't mind.'

'Do you know, I would advise your lying down in the shade awhile?' he observed solicitously. 'I have seen men on the march in Hungary and Italy. An hour's rest under cover would have saved them.'

I thanked him.

'Ice is the thing!' he ejaculated. 'I 'll ride and have some fetched to you. Rest here.'

With visible pleasure he swung to the saddle. I saw him fix his cavalry thighs and bound off as if he meant to take a gate. Had he glanced behind him he would have fancied that the sun had done its worst. I ran at full speed down the footpath, mad to think she might have returned homeward by the lake. The two had parted—why? He this way, she that. They would not have

parted but for a division of the will. I came on the empty boat. Schwartz lay near it beneath heavy boughs, smoking and perspiring in peace. Neither of us spoke. And it was now tempered by a fit of alarm that I renewed my search. So when I beheld her, intense gratitude broke my passion; when I touched her hand it was trembling for absolute assurance of her safety. She was leaning against a tree, gazing on the ground, a white figure in that iron-moted gloom.

'Otto!' she cried, shrinking from the touch; but at sight of me, all softly as a light in the heavens, her face melted in a suffusion of wavering smiles, and deep colour shot over them, heavenly to see. She pressed her bosom while I spoke:—a lover's speech, breathless.

'You love me?' she said.

'You have known it!'

'Yes, yes!'

'Forgiven me? Speak, princess.'

'Call me by my name.'

'My own soul! Ottilia!'

She disengaged her arms tenderly.

'I have known it by my knowledge of myself,' she said, breathing with her lips dissevered. 'My weakness has come upon me. Yes, I love you. It is spoken. It is too true. Is it a fate that brings us together when I have just lost my little remaining strength—all power? You hear me! I pretend to wisdom, and talk of fate!'

She tried to laugh in scorn of herself, and looked at me with almost a bitter smile on her features, made beautiful by her soft eyes. I feared from the helpless hanging of her underlip that she would swoon; a shudder convulsed her; and at the same time I became aware of the blotting out of sunlight, and a strange bowing and shore-like noising of the forest.

'Do not heed me,' she said in happy undertones. 'I

think I am going to cry like a girl. One cannot see one's pride die like this, without——but it is not anguish of any kind. Since we are here together, I would have no other change.'

She spoke till the tears came thick.

I told her of the letters I had received, warning me of a trouble besetting her. They were, perhaps, the excuse for my conduct, if I had any.

Schwartz burst on us with his drill-sergeant's shout for the princess. Standing grey in big rain-drops he was an object of curiosity to us both. He came to take her orders.

'The thunder,' he announced, raising a telegraphic arm, 'rolls. It rains. We have a storm. Command me, princess! your highness!'

Ottilia's eyelids were set blinking by one look aloft. Rain and lightning filled heaven and earth.

'Direct us, you!' she said to me gently.

The natural proposal was to despatch her giant by the direct way down the lake to fetch a carriage from the stables, or matting from the boathouse. I mentioned it, but did not press it.

She meditated an instant. 'I believe I may stay with my beloved?'

Schwartz and I ran to the boat, hauled it on land, and set it keel upward against a low leafy dripping branch. To this place of shelter, protecting her as securely as I could, I led the princess, while Schwartz happed a rough trench around it with one of the sculls. We started him on foot to do the best thing possible; for the storm gave no promise that it was a passing one. In truth, I knew that I should have been the emissary and he the guard; but the storm overhead was not fuller of its mighty burden than I of mine. I looked on her as mine for the hour, and well won.

CHAPTER XXXI

PRINCESS OTTILIA'S LETTER

THAT hour of tempest went swift as one of its flashes over our little nest of peace, where we crouched like insects. The lightning and the deluge seemed gloriously endless. Ottilia's harbouring nook was dry within an inch of rushing floods and pattered mire. On me the torrents descended, and her gentle efforts drew me to her side, as with a maternal claim to protect me, or to perish in my arms if the lightning found us. We had for prospect an ever-outbursting flame of foliage, and the hubbub of the hissing lake, crimson, purple, dusky grey, like the face of a passionate creature scourged. It was useless to speak. Her lips were shut, but I had the intent kindness of her eyes on me almost unceasingly.

The good hour slipped away. Old Warhead's splashed knees on the level of our heads were seen by us when the thunder had abated. Ottilia prepared to rise.

'You shall hear from me,' she said, bending with brows measuring the boat-roof, like a bird about to fly.

'Shall I see you?'

'Ultimately you surely will. Ah! still be patient.'

'Am I not? have I not been?'

'Yes; and can you regret it?'

'No; but we separate!'

'Would you have us be two feet high for ever?' she answered smiling.

'One foot high, or under earth, if it might be together!'

'Poor little gnomes!' said she.

The homeliness of our resting-place arrested her for an instant, and perhaps a touch of comic pity for things of

such diminutive size as to see nothing but knees where a man stood. Our heads were hidden.

'Adieu! no pledge is needed,' she said tenderly.

'None!' I replied.

She returned to the upper world with a burning blush.

Schwartz had borne himself with extraordinary discretion by forbearing to spread alarm at the palace. He saluted his young mistress in the regulation manner while receiving her beneath a vast umbrella, the holiday peasant's invariable companion in these parts. A forester was in attendance carrying shawls, clogs, and matting. The boat was turned and launched.

'Adieu, Harry Richmond. Will you be quite patient till you hear from me?' said Ottilia, and added, 'It is my question!' delightfully recalling old times.

I was soon gazing at the track of the boat in rough water.

Shouts were being raised somewhere about the forest, and were replied to by hearty bellow of the rower's lungs. She was now at liberty to join my name to her own or not, as she willed. I had to wait. But how much richer was I than all the world! The future owed me nothing. I would have registered a vow to ask nothing of it. Among the many determined purposes framing which I walked home, was one to obtain a grant of that bit of land where we had sat together, and build a temple on it. The fear that it might be trodden by feet of men before I had enclosed it beset me with anguish. The most absolute pain I suffered sprang from a bewildering incapacity to conjure up a vision of Ottilia free of the glittering accessories of her high birth; and that was the pain of shame; but it came only at intervals, when pride stood too loftily and the shadow of possible mischance threatened it with the axe.

She did not condemn me to long waiting. Her favourite Aennchen brought me her first letter. The girl's face beamed, and had a look as if she commended me for a worthy deed.

'An answer, Aennchen?' I asked her.

'Yes, yes!' said she anxiously; 'but it will take more time than I can spare.' She appointed a meeting near the palace garden-gates at night.

I chose a roof of limes to read under.

'Noblest and best beloved!' the princess addressed me in her own tongue, doubting, I perceived, as her training had taught her, that my English eyes would tolerate apostrophes of open-hearted affection. The rest was her English confided to a critic who would have good reason to be merciful:—

'The night has come that writes the chapter of the day. My father has had his interview with his head-forester to learn what has befallen from the storm in the forest. All has not been told him! That shall not be delayed beyond to-morrow.

'I am hurried to it. And I had the thought that it hung perhaps at the very end of my life among the coloured leaves, the strokes of sunset—that then it would be known! or if earlier, distant from this strange imperative Now. But we have our personal freedom now, and I have learnt from minutes what I did mean to seek from years, and from our forest what I hoped that change of scene, travel, experience, would teach me. Yet I was right in my intention. It was a discreet and a just meaning I had. For things will not go smoothly for him at once: he will have his hard battle. *He* is proved: *he* has passed his most brave ordeal. But I! Shall I see him put to it and not certainly know myself? Even thus I reasoned. One cannot study without knowing that our human nature is most frail. Daily the body

changes, daily the mind—why not the heart? I did design to travel and converse with various persons.

'Pardon it to one who knew that she would require superfeminine power of decision to resolve that she would dispose of herself!

'I heard of Harry Richmond before I saw him. My curiosity to behold the two fair boys of the sailor kingdom set me whipping my pony after them that day so remote, which is always yesterday. My thoughts followed you, and I wondered—does he mean to be a distinguished countryman of his Nelson? or a man of learning? Then many an argument with "my Professor," until—for so it will ever be—the weaker creature did succumb in the open controversy, and thought her thoughts to herself. Contempt of England gained on me still. But when I lay withered, though so young, by the sea-shore, his country's ancient grandeur insisted, and I dreamed of Harry Richmond, imagining that I had been false to my childhood. You stood before me, dearest. You were kind: you were strong, and had a gentle voice. Our souls were caught together on the sea. Do you recollect my slip in the speaking of Lucy Sibley's marriage?—"We change countries." At that moment I smelt salt air, which would bring you to my sight and touch were you and I divided let me not think how far.

'To-morrow I tell the prince, my father, that I am a plighted woman. Then for us the struggle, for him the grief. I have to look on him and deal it.

'I can refer him to Dr. Julius for my estimate of my husband's worth.

'"My Professor" was won by it. He once did incline to be the young bold Englishman's enemy. "Why is he here? what seeks he among us?" It was his jealousy, not of the man, but of the nation, which would send one to break and bear away his carefully cultivated

German lily. No eye but his did read me through. And you endured the trial that was forced on you. You made no claim for recompense when it was over. No, there is no pure love but strong love! It belongs to our original elements, and of its purity should never be question, only of its strength.

'I could not help you when you were put under scrutiny before the margravine and the baroness. Help from me would have been the betrayal of both. The world has accurate eyes, if they are not very penetrating. The world will see a want of balance immediately, and also too true a balance, but it will not detect a depth of concord between two souls that do not show some fretfulness on the surface.

'So it was considered that in refusing my cousin Otto and other proposed alliances, I was heart-free. An instructed princess, they thought, was of the woeful species of woman. You left us: I lost you. I heard you praised for civil indifference to me—the one great quality you do not possess! Then it was the fancy of people that I, being very cold, might be suffered to hear my cousin plead for himself. The majority of our family favour Otto. He was permitted to woo me as though I had been a simple maid; and henceforth shall I have pity for all poor little feminine things who are so persecuted, asked to inflict cruelty—to take a sword and strike with it. But I—who look on marriage as more than a surrender—I could well withstand surpassing eloquence. It was easy to me to be inflexible in speech and will when I stood there, entreated to change myself. But when came magically the other, who is my heart, my voice, my mate, the half of me, and broke into illumination of things long hidden—oh! then did I say to you that it was my weakness had come upon me? It was my last outcry of self—the "I" expiring. I am now yours, "We" has long

overshadowed "I," and now engulphs it. We are one. If it were new to me to find myself interrogating the mind of my beloved, relying on his courage, taking many proofs of his devotion, I might pause to re-peruse my words here, without scruple, written. I sign it, before heaven, your Ottilia.

'Ottilia Frederika Wilhelmina Hedwig,
'Princess of Eppenwelzen-Sarkeld.'

CHAPTER XXXII

AN INTERVIEW WITH PRINCE ERNEST AND A MEETING WITH PRINCE OTTO

A messenger from Prince Ernest commanding my immediate attendance at the palace signified that the battle had begun. I could have waited for my father, whose return from one of his expeditions in the prince's service was expected every instant; but though I knew I should have had a powerful coadjutor in him to assist me through such a conference, I preferred to go down alone. Prince Otto met me in the hall. He passed by, glancing an eye sharply, and said over his shoulder,—

'We shall have a word together presently!'

The library door was flung open. Prince Ernest and the margravine were in the room. She walked out with angry majesty. The prince held his figure in the stiff attitude of reception. He could look imposing.

The character of the interview was perceptible at once.

'You have not, I presume, to be informed of the business in hand, Mr. Richmond!'

'Your Highness, I believe I can guess it.'

This started him pacing the floor.

'An impossibility! a monstrous extravagance! a

thing unheard of! mania! mania!' he muttered. 'You are aware, sir, that you have been doing your worst to destroy the settled arrangements of my family? What does it mean? In common reason you cannot indulge any legitimate hope of succeeding. Taking you as a foreigner, you must know that. Judge of the case by your own reigning Families. Such events never happen amongst them. Do you suppose that the possession of immense wealth entitles you to the immeasurable presumption of aspiring to equality of position with reigning Houses? Such folly is more frequently castigated than reasoned with. Why, now—now, were it published that I had condescended—condescend as I am doing, I should be the laughing-stock of every Court in Europe. You English want many lessons. You are taught by your scribes to despise the dignity which is not supported by a multitude of bayonets, guns, and gold. I heard of it when I travelled incognito. You make merry over little potentates. Good. But do not cross their paths. Their dominion may be circumscribed, but they have it; and where we are now, my power equals that of the Kaiser and the Czar. You will do me the favour to understand that I am not boasting, not menacing; I attempt, since it is extraordinarily imposed on me, to instruct you. I have cause to be offended; I waive it. I meet you on common ground, and address myself to your good sense. Have you anything to say?'

'Much, sir.'

'Much?' he said, with affected incredulity.

The painful hardship for me was to reply in the vague terms he had been pleased to use.

'I have much to say, your Highness. First, to ask pardon of you, without excusing myself.'

'A condition, apparently, that absolves the necessity for the grant. Speak precisely.'

But I was as careful as he in abstaining from any direct indication of his daughter's complicity, and said, 'I have offended your Highness. You have done me the honour to suggest that it is owing to my English training. You will credit my assurance that the offence was not intentional, not preconceived.'

'You charge it upon your having been trained among a nation of shopkeepers?'

'My countrymen are not illiterate or unmannerly, your Highness.'

'I have not spoken it; I may add, I do not think it.'

'I feared that your Highness entertained what I find to be a very general, perhaps here and there wilful, error with regard to England.'

'When I was in the service I had a comrade, a gallant gentleman, deeply beloved by me, and he was an Englishman. He died in the uniform and under the flag I reverence.'

'I rejoice that your Highness has had this experience of us. I have to imagine that I expressed myself badly. My English training certainly does not preclude the respect due to exalted rank. Your Highness will, I trust humbly, pardon my offence. I do not excuse myself because I cannot withdraw, and I am incapable of saying that I regret it.'

'In cool blood you utter that?' exclaimed the prince.

His amazement was unfeigned.

'What are the impossible, monstrous ideas you—— where——? Who leads you to fancy there is one earthly chance for you when you say you cannot withdraw? Cannot? Are you requested? Are you consulted? It is a question to be decided in the imperative: you must. What wheel it is you think you have sufficient vigour to stop, I am profoundly unaware, but I am prepared to affirm that it is not the wheel of my household. I would

declare it, were I a plain citizen. You are a nullity in the case, in point of your individual will—a nullity swept away with one wave of the hand. You can do this, and nothing else: you can apologize, recognize your station, repair a degree of mischief that I will not say was preconceived or plotted. So for awhile pursue your studies, your travels. In time it will give me pleasure to receive you. Mr. Richmond,' he added, smiling and rising; 'even the head of a little German principality has to give numberless audiences.' His features took a more cordial smile to convince me that the dismissing sentence was merely playful.

As for me, my mind was confused by the visible fact that the father's features resembled the daughter's. I mention it, that my mind's condition may be understood.

Hardly had I been bowed out of the room when my father embraced me, and some minutes later I heard Prince Otto talking to me and demanding answers. That he or any one else should have hostile sentiments toward a poor devil like me seemed strange. My gift of the horse appeared to anger him most. I reached the château without once looking back, a dispirited wretch. I shut myself up; I tried to read. The singular brevity of my interview with the prince, from which I had expected great if not favourable issues, affected me as though I had been struck by a cannon shot; my brains were nowhere. His perfect courtesy was confounding. I was tormented by the delusion that I had behaved pusillanimously.

My father rushed up to me after dark. Embracing me and holding me by the hand, he congratulated me with his whole heart. The desire of his life was accomplished; the thing he had plotted for ages had come to pass. He praised me infinitely. My glorious future, he said, was to carry a princess to England and sit among the highest

there, the husband of a lady peerless in beauty and in birth, who, in addition to what she was able to do for me by way of elevation in my country, could ennoble in her own territory. I had the option of being the father of English nobles or of German princes; so forth. I did not like the strain; yet I clung to him. I was compelled to ask whether he had news of any sort worth hearing.

'None,' said he calmly; 'none. I have everything to hear, nothing to relate; and, happily, I can hardly speak for joy.' He wept.

He guaranteed to have the margravine at the château within a week, which seemed to me a sufficient miracle. The prince, he said, might require three months of discretionary treatment. Three further months to bring the family round, and the princess would be mine. 'But she is yours! she is yours already!' he cried authoritatively. 'She is the reigning intellect there. I dreaded her very intellect would give us all the trouble, and behold, it is our ally! The prince lives with an elbow out of his income. But for me it would be other parts of his person as well, I assure you, and the world would see such a princely tatterdemalion as would astonish it. Money to him is important. He must carry on his mine. He can carry on nothing without my help. By the way, we have to deal out cheques?'

I assented.

In spite of myself, I caught the contagion of his exuberant happiness and faith in his genius. The prince had applauded his energetic management of the affairs of the mine two or three times in my hearing. It struck me that he had really found his vocation, and would turn the sneer on those who had called him volatile and reckless. This led me to a luxurious sense of dependence on him, and I was willing to live on dreaming and amused, though all around me seemed phantoms, especially the French

troupe, the flower of the Parisian stage: Regnault, Carigny, Desbarolles, Mesdames Blanche Bignet and Dupertuy, and Mdlle. Jenny Chassediane, the most spirituelle of Frenchwomen. They are a part of our enginery, Richie,' my father said. They proved to be an irresistible attraction to the margravine. She sent word to my father that she meant to come on a particular day when, as she evidently knew, I should not be present. Two or three hours later I had Prince Otto's cartel in my hands. Jorian DeWitt, our guest at this season, told me subsequently, and with the utmost seriousness, that I was largely indebted to Mdlle. Jenny for a touching French song of a beau chevalier she sang before Ottilia in my absence. Both he and my father believed in the efficacy of this kind of enginery, but, as the case happened, the beau chevalier was down low enough at the moment his high-born lady listened to the song.

It appeared that when Prince Otto met me after my interview with Prince Ernest, he did his best to provoke a rencontre, and failing to get anything but a nod from my stunned head, betook himself to my University. A friendly young fellow there, Eckart vom Hof, offered to fight him on my behalf, should I think proper to refuse. Eckart and two or three others made a spirited stand against the aristocratic party siding with Prince Otto, whose case was that I had played him a dishonourable trick to laugh at him. I had, in truth, persuaded him to relieve me at once of horse and rival at the moment when he was suffering the tortures of a rejection, and I was rushing to take the hand he coveted; I was so far guilty. But to how great a degree guiltless, how could I possibly explain to the satisfaction of an angry man? I had the vision of him leaping on the horse, while I perused his challenge; saw him fix to the saddle and smile hard, and away to do me of all services the last he would have per-

formed wittingly. The situation was exactly of a sort for one of his German phantasy-writers to image the forest jeering at him as he flew, blind, deaf, and unreasonable, vehement for one fierce draught of speed. We are all dogged by the humour of following events when we start on a wind of passion. I could almost fancy myself an accomplice. I realized the scene with such intensity in the light running at his heels: it may be quite true that I laughed in the hearing of his messenger as I folded up the letter. That was the man's report. I am not commonly one to be forgetful of due observances.

The prospect of the possible eternal separation from my beloved pricked my mechanical wits and set them tracing the consequent line by which I had been brought to this pass as to a natural result. Had not my father succeeded in inspiring the idea that I was something more than something? The tendency of young men is to conceive it for themselves without assistance; a prolonged puff from the breath of another is nearly sure to make them mad as kings, and not so pardonably.

I see that I might have acted wisely, and did not; but that is a speculation taken apart from my capabilities. If a man's fate were as a forbidden fruit, detached from him, and in front of him, he might hesitate fortunately before plucking it; but, as most of us are aware, the vital half of it lies in the seed-paths he has traversed. We are sons of yesterday, not of the morning. The past is our mortal mother, no dead thing. Our future constantly reflects her to the soul. Nor is it ever the new man of to-day which grasps his fortune, good or ill. We are pushed to it by the hundreds of days we have buried, eager ghosts. And if you have not the habit of taking counsel with them, you are but an instrument in their hands.

My English tongue admonishes me that I have fallen upon a tone resembling one who uplifts the finger of piety

in a salon of conversation. A man's review of the course of his life grows for a moment stringently serious when he beholds the stream first broadening perchance under the light interpenetrating mine just now.

My seconds were young Eckart vom Hof, and the barely much older, though already famous Gregorius Bandelmeyer, a noted mathematician, a savage Republican, lean-faced, spectacled, and long, soft-fingered; a cat to look at, a tiger to touch. Both of them were animated by detestation of the Imperial uniform. They distrusted my skill in the management of the weapon I had chosen; for reasons of their own they carried a case of pistols to the field. Prince Otto was attended by Count Loepel and a Major Edelsheim of his army, fresh from the garrison fortress of Mainz, gentlemen perfectly conversant with the laws of the game, which my worthy comrades were not. Several minutes were spent in an altercation between Edelsheim and Bandelmeyer. The major might have had an affair of his own had he pleased. My feelings were concentrated within the immediate ring where I stood: I can compare them only to those of a gambler determined to throw his largest stake and abide the issue. I was not open to any distinct impression of the surrounding scenery; the hills and leafage seemed to wear an iron aspect. My darling, my saint's face was shut up in my heart, and with it a little inaudible cry of love and pain. The prince declined to listen to apologies. 'He meant to teach me that this was not a laughing matter.' Major Edelsheim had misunderstood Bandelmeyer; no offer of an apology had been made. A momentary human sensation of an unworthy sort beset me when I saw them standing together again, and contrasted the collectedness and good-humour of my adversary's representative with the vexatious and unnecessary naggling of mine, the sight of whose yard-long pipe scandalized me.

At last the practical word was given. The prince did not reply to my salute. He was smoking, and kept his cigar in one corner of his mouth, as if he were a master fencer bidding his pupil to come on. He assumed that he had to do with a bourgeois Briton unused to arms, such as we are generally held to be on the Continent. After feeling my wrist for a while he shook the cigar out of his teeth.

The 'cliquetis' of the crossed steel must be very distant in memory, and yourself in a most dilettante frame of mind, for you to be accessible to the music of that thin skeleton's clank. Nevertheless, it is better and finer even at the time of action, than the abominable hollow ogre's eye of the pistol-muzzle. We exchanged passes, the prince chiefly attacking. Of all the things to strike my thoughts, can you credit me that the vividest was the picture of the old woman Temple and I had seen in our boyhood on the night of the fire dropping askew, like forks of brown flame, from the burning house in London city; I must have smiled. The prince cried out in French: 'Laugh, sir; you shall have it!' He had nothing but his impetuosity for an assurance of his promise, and was never able to force me back beyond a foot. I touched him on the arm and the shoulder, and finally pierced his arm above the elbow. I could have done nearly what I liked with him; his skill was that of a common regimental sabreur.

'Ludere qui nescit campestribus abstinet armis!' Bandelmeyer sang out.

'You observed?' said Major Edelsheim, and received another disconcerting discharge of a Latin line. The prince frowned and made use of some military slang. Was his honour now satisfied? Not a whit. He certainly could not have kept his sword-point straight, and yet he clamoured to fight on, stamped, and summoned

me to assault him, proposed to fight me with his left hand after his right had failed; in short, he was beside himself, an example of the predicament of a man who has given all the provocation and finds himself disabled. My seconds could have stopped it had they been equal to their duties; instead of which Bandelmeyer, hearing what he deemed an insult to the order of student and scholar, retorted furiously and offensively, and Eckart, out of good-fellowship, joined him, whereat Major Edelsheim, in the act of bandaging the prince's arm, warned them that he could not pass by an outrage on his uniform. Count Loepel stept politely forward, and gave Eckart a significant bow. The latter remarked mockingly, 'With pleasure and condescension!' At a murmur of the name of doctor from Edelsheim, the prince damned the doctor until he or I were food for him. Irritated by the whole scene, and his extravagant vindictiveness, in which light I regarded the cloak of fury he had flung over the shame of his defeat, I called to Bandelmeyer to open his case of pistols and offer them for a settlement. As the proposal came from me, it was found acceptable. The major remonstrated with the prince, and expressed to me his regrets and et cæteras of well-meant civility. He had a hard task to keep out of the hands of Bandelmeyer, who had seized my sword, and wanted vi et armis to defend the cause of Learning and the People against military brigands on the spot. If I had not fallen we should have had one or two other prostrate bodies.

A silly business on all sides.

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